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# Mentoring practices in family and consumer sciences education: a model for change

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**Mentoring practices in family and consumer sciences education:  
A model for change**

by

**Renee F. Ryburn**

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

Major: Family and Consumer Sciences Education

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Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2007

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## ABSTRACT

Several states have mentoring and induction programs to assist beginning family and consumer sciences (FCS) secondary teachers as they adapt to the rigorous demands of their chosen profession. Though these programs are helpful, many beginning teachers find themselves feeling isolated and overwhelmed with the challenges that they face in the classroom. There are many indications that beginning FCS teachers are leaving the classroom due to these frustrations and a lack of support, contributing to a shortage of secondary FCS teachers. The primary purpose of this study was to identify existing programs designed to mentor beginning secondary teachers in FCS education. The secondary purpose of this study was to conceptualize a model that can be implemented nationally for mentoring beginning secondary teachers in FCS education. The samples in this study included FCS state departments of education administrators, FCS teacher educators, a beginning FCS teacher focus group, and a focus group of FCS professionals. The administrators and teacher educators responded to a survey describing mentoring and induction programs that were being used in their states. The beginning teacher focus group described what it was like to be a new FCS secondary teacher. The study revealed that beginning FCS secondary teachers felt isolated from other FCS teachers and frustrated with the large workload and responsibility. These beginning teachers also suggested that additional assistance with lesson planning, pedagogy, and management techniques would enhance their teaching practices. Participants in this study indicated that a national mentoring model involving the use of technology would further assist beginning secondary FCS teachers. After the results were analyzed, a mentoring model was conceptualized. The model will be presented as a Web site called *TeachForever.org*.

## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

As a family and consumer sciences (FCS) teacher educator with 17 years of experience, I am keenly aware of the struggles experienced by beginning FCS teachers during their first years of teaching. I have often talked with beginning teachers who work into the night to prepare for the next day. Unfortunately, several beginning teachers from my program have left teaching after the first year. The most telling situation occurred recently when a graduate from my university's FCS education program called to offer our department several large boxes of lesson plans that she had created during her first year of teaching. She said that she had no plans to return to the classroom. She explained that she was exhausted after planning for eight different FCS courses, and that she wanted to donate her curriculum units to assist other beginning FCS teachers. This resolution is too often the case for beginning FCS teachers. Though all beginning teachers experience difficulty during their first years, FCS teachers are often more overwhelmed because of the number of preparations and laboratories. These and similar stories along with my commitment to the preparation of FCS teachers led me to explore what alternative solutions could be developed to address this perennial problem in education. Pondering what might be done to help the situation, directed me to begin a research journey into mentoring beginning FCS teachers.

Family and consumer sciences (FCS) literature has been replete with documentation expressing concern for the plight of beginning teachers (Bull & Cummings, 2002; Miller & Meszaros, 1996; Stout, Couch & Fowler, 1998). New and returning teachers experience difficulty and frustration during the first years of teaching and often leave the profession to pursue other careers (Mimbs, 2000). Though the shortage of teachers is occurring in all areas of education, the shortage in FCS seems to be exacerbated by the fact that FCS teachers are

often in schools where there are no other FCS educators. Further, most FCS teachers have three to five different course preparations and laboratories each day. Beginning teachers, frustrated with the rigorous demands of teaching coupled with their feelings of isolation, soon find other employment options (Boreen & Niday, 2000). Because there is a shortage of teachers, an emphasis has been placed on the recruitment of teachers (Ingersoll, 2001; Mimbs, 2000). Although recruitment of teachers is an important first step in meeting the demand for teachers, retention of new teachers is recognized as extremely important (Halford, 1998).

Retaining new FCS teachers has become a challenge to which finding solutions is essential. The National Education Association (NEA) describes the overall turnover rate of new teachers as startling. NEA reports that while approximately 20% of newly hired teachers leave the profession during the first three years, in urban school districts it is estimated that 50% of teachers leave the classroom within the first five years. Many studies indicate that new teachers are leaving the profession due to frustration and lack of support (National Education Association, n.d.). The phenomenon is also well documented in FCS education (Lichty & Robles, 2003).

Several research studies have documented the fact that the demand for FCS educators greatly exceeds the supply (Bull & Cummings, 2002; Miller & Meszaros, 1996; Stout et al., 1998). While the need for FCS education majors has remained high, the number of FCS education programs and those choosing to major in FCS education has declined (Miller & Meszaros; Stout et al.). The Family and Consumer Sciences profession is experiencing a shortage of teachers in many states (Bull & Cummings). In addition to the shortage caused by a low number of students choosing to major in FCS education, many FCS teachers are

planning to retire in the near future. In a recent study conducted by Bull and Cummings (2002), 15% of the FCS teachers in the state of Connecticut indicated plans to retire within five years and an additional 29.5% indicated plans to retire within ten years. Each of these factors has contributed to the nationwide shortage of FCS secondary teachers.

The retention problem faced by FCS education is cyclical in nature. It is compounded, because each component of the problem is related to the other. Fewer students are selecting FCS education as a college major. Consequently, fewer graduates are being prepared to teach FCS in the secondary schools. Because there are fewer teachers prepared for the available positions, the demand for FCS teachers becomes even greater. Some beginning teachers are overwhelmed with the demands of the job and the isolation they feel as a result of being the only FCS teacher in the school. Lack of mentoring by teachers who understand the subject area may leave new FCS teachers feeling discouraged. This, in turn, results in new teachers leaving the classrooms. If beginning teachers are not mentored, as the more seasoned educators retire, there will be fewer FCS teachers to assume the vacant positions.

### **Description of the Problem**

There is an exodus of beginning teachers from the nation's classrooms. This exodus is well documented in the area of family and consumer sciences education (Bull & Cummings, 2002; Miller & Meszaros, 1996; Stout, et al., 1998). Teacher retention has been of great concern to those in education for many years (Mimbs, 2000). Teacher turnover affects the quality of existing FCS programs. This in turn affects the students who will gain from the FCS content. Though teachers leave the classroom for a variety of reasons, many new teachers leave because of their feelings of isolation, frustration, and lack of support

(Boreen & Niday, 2000). The existence of formal mentoring programs has been shown to have a positive effect on the retention of new teachers (Brandell, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Though there has recently been an increase in the number of mentoring and induction programs that help new teachers adjust to the rigors of teaching, the number of new teachers leaving the profession continues to plague the educational system. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that the link between the use of mentoring programs and the reduction in the turnover of new teachers is strong. In addition these researchers discovered that beginning teachers who had mentors from the same discipline were less likely to leave the teaching profession. Beginning teacher mentoring programs designed for FCS vary greatly. Because new FCS teachers continue to leave the ranks, it appears that existing mentoring programs need to be changed or improved. This professional situation could be solved with an investigation of existing mentoring programs offered nationwide to establish a new model for FCS beginning teacher mentoring.

### **Rationale for the Study**

The primary goal of this study was to determine what FCS education mentoring practices and programs for new and returning teachers currently exist. The secondary goal of this study was to conceptualize a model for mentoring beginning FCS teachers.

The problem of retaining teachers is felt in all disciplines throughout the country. Though new teachers enthusiastically begin their careers in education, often the reality of teaching does not live up to their expectations. They find themselves overwhelmed with administrative tasks, feelings of isolation from other teachers, curriculum requirements, and students' needs. As the year progresses many new teachers begin a struggle to survive. Even

though most of those entering teaching do so because they have felt a “calling” since childhood, many beginning teachers fail to thrive and leave the classroom early in their careers (Moir, 2003; Strong, 2005).

As teachers leave the classroom the problem perpetuates itself. According to Moir (2003), when seasoned teachers leave the classroom they take a wealth of knowledge and experience with them. As a result community and parental confidence in the program is compromised, possibly taking years to rebuild. Often when an inexperienced teacher leaves unexpectedly, a new hire is quickly found to fill the void. Moir also suggested that the replacement may be hired in haste and not be the most highly qualified for the position, so the newly hired teacher struggles even more than the previous teacher. A self-perpetuating cycle of attrition is then in place, making the attrition both a burden financially and educationally on the school system. One of the most significant impacts of teacher attrition is on the success of the students (Moir, 2003).

Though reform of the United States (U.S.) educational system has been discussed for many years, a major overhaul is taking place with the demands of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation. One of the mandates in the NCLB legislation is that all children be taught by highly qualified teachers. Highly qualified teachers are described as those who not only know the content, but are also able to successfully communicate and engage students in meaningful learning experiences (U. S. Department of Education, n.d.). Pickard (2004) suggested that well prepared mentors assist new FCS professionals in meeting standards to ensure that the beginning teachers obtain the highly qualified designation. NCLB legislation also requires schools to become proficient or better in reading, language arts, and mathematics (U. S. Department of Education., n.d.). Though FCS teachers have been

integrating reading, writing, math, science, and other essential skills while using a student-centered approach, FCS programs must document their efforts and successes in meeting the NCLB reforms (Pickard).

Because of the ongoing education reform and the demands for testing required by states to comply with the NCLB legislation, middle school and secondary elective courses may be in jeopardy (Pickard, 2004). For FCS programs to be considered relevant and essential, FCS teachers must document their efforts and successes in the reinforcement of academic skills and FCS standards. New FCS teachers need guidance in the process of collecting evidence of student growth in both the core and content areas. Pickard also recommended that new FCS teachers be assisted in the development of their ability to communicate the effectiveness of their FCS programs to parents, administrators, school boards, and other decision makers. Pickard concluded that mentors are positioned to gain awareness of the new teachers' needs in the areas of effectiveness and communication, and provide suggestions that will assist beginning FCS teachers in demonstrating and articulating the effectiveness of their teaching and programs.

The creation of a nationwide model for mentoring beginning teachers in FCS provides a systematic approach to addressing the perennial problem of losing new teachers in the profession. What obligation do FCS professionals have to provide mentoring programs for beginning teachers? Does the FCS profession have an obligation to support and mentor teachers in secondary teaching positions? Whose problem is this? Does the problem belong to FCS teacher educators, state department of education administrators, or to the professional associations? Can the answer lie in a collaborative approach to supporting the FCS newest professionals in accomplishing the profession's mission in the nation's classrooms?

Research is needed that explores the wide array of programs presently used to mentor FCS teachers. This review was used in conceptualizing a new mentoring model to respond to this need.

### **Purpose Statement**

The primary purpose of this study was to identify existing programs designed to mentor beginning secondary teachers in family and consumer sciences education. The secondary purpose of this study was to develop a model for mentoring beginning secondary teachers in family and consumer sciences education. Specific objectives of this research study were to:

1. Identify needs and concerns of beginning family and consumer sciences teachers.
2. Identify existing mentoring and induction programs in family and consumer sciences education at the state and national levels.
  - a. Examine the delivery systems used in existing mentoring and induction programs in family and consumer sciences education.
  - b. Analyze existing effectiveness data of family and consumer sciences mentoring and induction programs.
3. Identify components of effective mentoring for beginning teachers through a review of literature.
4. Conceptualize a model that meets the needs identified for mentoring beginning family and consumer sciences teachers.



### **Purpose of the Study**

Learning to teach is complex. Academic preparation and field experiences set the stage for the practicum or student teaching experience. However, the real test begins when the new teacher sets foot in his or her classroom. As these new hires begin teaching they are often overwhelmed by the expectations of the job and feelings of isolation and frustration. Beginning teachers are often given little or no support to help them cope with the challenges they face behind their classroom doors. As a result of these frustrations, 30% of new teachers are said to leave the classroom during the first few years of teaching (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future [NCTAF], 1996).

In response to the need for beginning teacher support, some states have mandated mentoring programs (Gold, 1996). Studies have shown that more than 50% of states provide new teachers with mentors. Mentoring programs have been found to provide guidance that brings about both psychological and cognitive growth in new teachers (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2001). Because beginning teachers have become aware of the support that can be provided by these efforts (National Conference on Teacher Quality Exemplary Practices [NCTQEP], 2000), many new teachers have chosen to work in districts that provide induction and mentoring programs. Therefore, many districts have begun to use mentoring programs as recruitment tools for new teachers.

Implementation of mentoring and induction programs has been shown to sharply increase the retention rates of teachers. According to Feaster (2000), the Armstrong Atlantic State University branch of the Pathways to Teaching Careers Program, which had a strong mentoring component, reported a 100% retention rate of beginning teachers after four years.

Other programs that contain a mentoring component have reported drops in teacher attrition rates by as much as 80% (Feaster).

This study is twofold in that it (1) determines what presently exists in the United States and the profession to mentor beginning FCS teachers and (2) conceptualizes a model mentoring program to be used to assist beginning FCS teachers in their adjustment to the world of teaching. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What FCS related literature presently exists in the area of mentoring beginning FCS teachers?
2. What are the needs and concerns of FCS beginning secondary teachers?
3. What programs exist in the FCS at the state and national levels that provide mentoring for beginning FCS teachers?
4. What alternative strategies could be developed to mentor beginning teachers in FCS education?
5. What models for the mentoring of beginning FCS teachers currently exist?

### **Design of the Study**

To best explore and understand the problem, mixed method design was chosen by the researcher. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies were selected by the researcher to address the research purposes, questions, and objectives. In an effort to identify the needs and concerns of beginning FCS secondary teachers the researcher chose to use a focus group of new FCS secondary teachers to provide this data. To further explore the needs and concerns of beginning teachers and to identify existing mentoring and induction programs in FCS education, the researcher determined that the use of a survey instrument containing both closed-ended and open-ended questions would be the most appropriate

collection method. The survey would be mailed to FCS state departments of education administrators and to FCS teacher educators throughout the nation. In order to triangulate the data and to develop a new mentoring model the researcher chose to include a second focus group of FCS teacher educators and professionals.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is important to the FCS profession, but more importantly it is advantageous to the students who benefit from the courses taught by FCS educators nationwide. This research adds to the body of knowledge in FCS and in mentoring. Also, it suggests a new approach to mentoring beginning teachers.

Specifically, this study sought to develop a model to be used by the profession to mentor beginning teachers in FCS, which is something that has not been done before by the profession. Ultimately, this study offers a proposed program to support beginning teachers in FCS. There are hundreds of mentoring programs for beginning teachers, yet there is no complete model to mentor beginning FCS teachers.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms have been defined for the purposes of this study:

**Attrition** – gradual reduction in personnel as through retirement or resignation

**Beginning teacher** – a new educator who has been teaching three years or less

**Blog** – an online publication in the form of a log or journal

**Induction programs** – programs that include activities and processes necessary to successfully induct beginning teachers into the profession of teaching; includes orientation, mentoring, and staff development specific to the needs of the beginning

teacher; usually occurring near the start of a school year though duration and intensity of induction programs vary

**Mentor** – a person, usually a seasoned teacher, entrusted with tutoring, guiding, and teaching another who is typically new or returning to teaching or to a given school

**Mentoring programs** – ongoing programs designed to support and guide beginning teachers through the necessary transitions to become effective teachers and life-long learners

**Mentee** – a person, usually a teacher, who is being guided or mentored by another more experienced person or teacher

**Non-traditional teacher** – a teacher who has entered the teaching profession through alternative means; not including the traditional degree in teacher education

**Protégé** – a beginning teacher who is new to the education profession

**Returning teachers** – Licensed teachers returning to the teaching profession after a period of years

**Secondary education** – generally composed of grades 9 through 12; programs at the junior high or high school levels

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

As with any research study the ultimate goal of this study is to add to the body of knowledge within the FCS profession. To accomplish this goal the survey instrument and the focus group questions needed to be reliable so that inferences could be drawn to the population (Creswell, 2002). To ensure reliability the purposes and objectives of the study were identified and a review of the literature was conducted, before the questions were formulated. Also, the survey instrument was prepared to address each of the purposes and

objectives of this study. An item analysis was conducted to match each survey question to the corresponding purpose or objective. Additionally, the questionnaire was completed and sent to the researcher's program of study committee at Iowa State University for review. After changes were made based on the review, the instrument was field tested.

The participants in this study were selected based upon their knowledge of the FCS teacher education programs. State department of education program administrators were aware of programs in teacher education, because they work with FCS teachers and record FCS education data. Also, many of the university teacher educators continue to work with FCS secondary teachers during their first years of teaching.

The researcher identified four primary limitations of this study. One of the limitations was that some of the survey participants may not have been aware of the details involved in the induction and mentoring programs in their particular states, schools, or institutions. The samples that were used in this study were composed of teacher educators and state department of education administrators who belonged to two professional organizations, the National Association of Teacher Educators in Family and Consumer Sciences (NATEFACS) and the National Association of State Administrators in Family and Consumer Sciences (NASAFACS) respectively. These were selected because the lists were available, while educators who were not members of these professional groups were not accessible for contact. The FCS educators who were not on these lists may have been more familiar with the existing mentoring and induction programs that were in place in a particular state, school, or institution. A second limitation of this study was that changes may have occurred in the electronic mailing addresses of the sample since the lists were obtained, making it difficult to contact these FCS professionals. A third limitation of this study was

that the beginning teacher focus group was limited to one state, and each of the participants graduated from the same undergraduate education program. A forth limitation of this study was that the mentoring model conceptualized as a result of this research may not be applicable to every state's FCS programs due to the differences in the state educational systems.

## **CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **The Importance of Mentoring New Teachers**

The development of effective strategies for the recruitment and retention of committed teachers is a major focus for most schools across the nation. Because there is a teacher shortage, great emphasis has been placed on recruitment (Mimbs, 2002; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Although recruitment of educators is very important in meeting the demand for teachers, retention of new teachers is considered to be vital (Halford, 1998; Ingersoll, 2003). Several studies have shown statistically significant links between mentoring and induction programs and a reduction in beginning teacher attrition rates. Researchers agree that while the recruitment of teachers is essential, keeping new teachers in the classroom is most important (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Ingersoll (2003) described the attrition of teachers as a “revolving door,” where teachers often leave the profession and possibly return years later. He suggested that growth in secondary student enrollment coupled with teachers leaving the profession have resulted in less qualified teachers being hired. According to Ingersoll, data indicated that the shortage of teachers is not primarily the result of too few new teachers coming into the profession. He credited the “revolving door” or the departure of a large number of teachers long before retirement as the reason for the teacher shortage. Therefore, Ingersoll recommended that efforts to retain teachers be increased.

Participation in mentoring and induction programs has been shown to have a positive impact on the attrition rate of beginning teachers. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that the participation of new teachers in mentoring and induction programs plays a significant role in reducing the rate of teacher turnover. In a recent study Smith and Ingersoll noted the

turnover of first year teachers based on whether or not they participated in mentoring and induction programs. The researchers also considered the amount of induction and mentoring that each teacher received. The data indicated that the predicted probability of turnover of newly hired, inexperienced teachers who received no induction or mentoring was 40%, while the predicted probability of turnover of the new inexperienced hires who received some induction and mentoring was 28%. The participants in the study who received “some” induction and mentoring were assigned to a mentor in the same field, had planning time with other teachers in the same subject area, and had scheduled time to meet with other teachers regarding instruction. The “full” experience offered additional components including participation in a general program of induction, participation in a seminar for beginning teachers, communication with their principals and other administrators, participation in an external network, and a reduction in the number of course preparations. The probability of departure at the end of the first year for these participants was only 18%, making the package of components statistically significant (Ingersoll, 2003). The researchers observed that the newly hired, inexperienced teachers who experienced the “full” induction and mentoring program were impacted most. Smith and Ingersoll concluded that there is a significant link between participation by beginning teachers in induction and mentoring programs and the likelihood of teachers leaving or moving after the first year of teaching.

Numerous induction and mentoring programs are in place to support and guide new teachers. Though these programs vary greatly, each is intended to increase the effectiveness of new teachers and reduce the attrition rates among beginning teachers. Although these programs appear to be making a difference, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) determined that an assessment of the effectiveness data of existing programs needed to be



collected and analyzed to provide data to policymakers, researchers, and educators (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Ingersoll and Kralik conducted the ECS research study that involved the review of more than 500 studies that reported results of existing induction and mentoring program effectiveness. Of the 500 only ten studies met the three criteria set by the commission. To be included in the effectiveness study the commission determined that each of the studies had to involve quantitative research, evaluate in well-defined terms the effects of the mentoring and induction programs, and compare program participants to non-participants (Ingersoll & Kralik).

In the ECS study the data were examined by Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) to determine the beginning teacher mentoring program effectiveness. As reported by Ingersoll and Kralik, the ten mentoring and induction programs that provided empirical data that met the three criteria set by the ECS were (a) The California Mentor Teacher Induction Project, (b) The New York City Retired-Teachers-as-Mentors Program, (c) The Toronto Teacher Peer Support Program, (d) The Mentoring Program in an Unspecified District, (e) The Montana Beginning Teacher Support Program, (f) The Texas Study of New Teacher Retention, (g) The Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Survey, (h) The Analyses of the 1990-91 Schools and Staffing Survey, (i) The Analyses of the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey, and (j) The Texas Beginning Educator Support System. After reviewing these ten selected studies, it was determined that, “collectively the studies do provide empirical support for the claim that assistance for new teachers and, in particular, mentoring programs have a positive impact on teachers and their retention” (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004, p.1).

Although this ECS study linked mentoring and induction programs to a decrease in beginning teacher attrition, many questions were raised. At the conclusion of this study

Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) recommended that further research take place to determine which new teachers benefited most from being mentored, and which elements of the mentoring programs were most helpful.

### **Beginning Teacher Isolation**

Feelings of isolation from colleagues are common among new teachers (Halford, 1998; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Lichty & Robles, 2003). Though teaching involves much interaction with students, there is very little interaction between teachers. The frustrations experienced by a first year teacher were noted by Halford (1998):

Nothing in her teacher preparation program, including her one-year internship at another school, had prepared Julia for the isolation she would experience during her first months at Whitman. As a new teacher in a probationary period, Julia was concerned that seeking assistance for her classroom problems would be viewed as a sign of incompetence. She also began to question whether her colleagues shared her philosophy of teaching and learning, and this compounded her concerns. As the school year wore on, Julia wore out. Teaching left her with feelings of disillusionment and failure, shattering her idealism. By June, Julia decided to leave teaching and pursue another career. (p. 33)

Halford (1998) suggested that new teachers need someone to talk to about classroom issues, and that mentors are a powerful resource and can be a professional lifeline for new teachers. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) agreed that new teachers are isolated from other teachers and are left to “sink or swim” as they proceed through the first years on their own. These researchers described the profession of teaching as an occupation that cannibalizes its young. Smith and Ingersoll concluded that schools need to employ well designed mentoring

programs in order to assist and retain new teachers. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002) also suggested that an essential element in the development of successful teachers is time to enter into positive discussions with mentors and other educators.

### **Mentoring Defined**

Mentoring programs and practices continue to gain popularity in educational venues, because of the role they play in providing beginning teachers with the support needed to be successful in the classroom. Though beginning teacher mentoring programs and practices vary widely, the ultimate goal is to assist new teachers in becoming better practitioners. Mentoring practices and programs must obviously involve both mentors and mentees. Mentors are often described as those more experienced, who offer support and guidance to those less experienced (Burke, 2002). In the educational arena the more experienced are usually veteran teachers, who choose to form helpful relationships with inexperienced teachers. The beginning teacher is often referred to as a mentee, a novice, or a protégé (Burke).

After years of research in the area of teacher induction and mentoring, Sweeny (2001) defined mentoring as, “a process of accomplishing a series of developmental tasks while creating a confidential, supportive, and mutual relationship” (p. xi). He further described the relationship of beginning teacher mentors and mentees as one that facilitates “the professional development of a beginning teacher into an effective, experienced teacher” (p. xiii).

Gold (1996) suggested that the definition of mentoring lies somewhere between what exists in the literature and what is still being researched and discovered. Therefore, mentoring practices have continued to evolve to meet the ever changing needs of beginning

teachers. The importance of mentoring is evident as mentors continue to expand the horizons of beginning teachers by providing supportive coaching and counseling.

### **Mentoring Program Effectiveness**

Do mentoring programs really matter? What are the components of effective mentoring programs for beginning teachers? In a recent study Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) reviewed research studies on beginning teaching mentoring programs to provide policymakers, educators and researchers with effectiveness data, and to identify research questions concerning new teacher mentoring programs that needed to be addressed. This study found that beginning teacher mentoring programs have a positive impact on the teachers and the retention of these teachers. Ingersoll and Kralik's research also indicated that mentoring programs vary greatly in their content, delivery, and duration. Because of these and other variables, the researchers concluded that additional controlled systematic research would need to be conducted to determine which factors contribute most to the effectiveness of the beginning teacher mentoring programs.

Though the objective of all beginning teacher mentoring programs is to guide the teachers who they serve, Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) found that there are a number of variations in beginning teacher mentoring programs. One distinction was in the intensity and duration of the programs. Although some beginning teacher mentoring programs involved mentors and mentees in only one meeting, other programs provided beginning teachers with a series of frequent, structured mentoring meetings that extended over a period of years. Several of the programs allowed for release time from teaching loads for both mentees and mentors, whereas others provided little or no release time. A second variation in the beginning teacher mentoring programs had to do with the type of teachers who were served.

Although some programs included only inexperienced teachers, others also involved returning teachers and teachers who were new to a particular school. A third difference in mentoring programs was in the program objectives and purposes. For example, some program objectives included an assessment component for new teachers in addition to the activities that promoted professional growth.

Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) also found that beginning teacher mentoring programs varied in the selection, compensation, and preparation of mentors. In some cases mentors were monetarily compensated for their efforts, while in other programs the mentors were given recognition for their time and effort. Many programs selected teachers who met certain qualifications that would contribute to their ability to be outstanding mentors. Also, many mentoring programs attempted to match veteran teachers and beginning teachers according to their program or professional areas, while the criteria for selection in other programs was to match teachers within a grade level or a building.

It was determined by Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) that the variations in mentoring programs have made the comparison of programs difficult. They also suggested that these differences have made data collection of existing mentoring program effectiveness very challenging.

Though programs vary greatly, the ultimate objective of most beginning teacher mentoring programs is to affect the educational growth of the students (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Because the retention of teachers is linked to student success in the classroom, the effectiveness of beginning teacher mentoring and induction programs is often determined by measuring teacher attitudes about their career choice and the rate of teacher attrition (Barnes, Crowe & Schaefer, 2003; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). In recent years several school districts

and institutions have gathered assessment data to measure program success and to determine the need for beginning teacher mentoring and induction programs.

To measure the effectiveness of a beginning teacher mentoring program in Toronto, the Toronto Board of Education implemented a two-year study beginning in 1990 (Cheng & Brown, 1992). The mentoring project paired new hires with volunteer mentors who were in similar grade levels or programs. The participants were given five release days during the school year, which were dedicated to professional sharing and planned professional development projects. The study involved 25 pairs of teacher participants. A comparison group of new teachers who were unable to enter the program was also selected to participate. Each of the groups answered a questionnaire, kept a journal, and participated in focus groups to evaluate their beginning teaching experiences. It was found that the new teachers who participated in the mentoring project were much more likely to report overall positive experiences as beginning teachers. Results also indicated that participants in the mentoring and induction program felt that they had made the right career choice to become a teacher, while many of the beginning teachers who did not participate in the program felt they may have made the wrong career choice (Cheng & Brown).

Through years of work with beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs, Sweeny (2001) developed a model for effective beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs. Sweeny's objective was to create a model to represent the best practices in induction and mentoring. Effective beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs, according to Sweeny's research, include the following components: (a) a time line for the program, (b) clearly defined purposes for the program, (c) written program resource materials, (d) well defined, ongoing program activities, (e) training and seminars to address

needs of the beginning teacher, (f) opportunities for new teachers to observe veteran teachers, (e) peer support groups, (f) training, selection, and matching criteria for mentors, (i) improvement activities including coaching, (j) professional development goals and action plans, (k) use of a professional development portfolio, (l) time provided for specified program activities, (j) a budget line item for mentoring programs, (k) administrative training, (l) collaborative group program coordination, (m) joint planning with higher education institutions, (n) clearly defined characteristics and roles for mentors, (o) mentor selection criteria, (p) matching criteria, (q) ongoing mentor training, (r) clear expectations for the mentor/mentee relationship, (s) mentor peer support groups, (t) mentoring of mentors by a lead mentor, (u) administrative support, (v) time for planning and mentoring, and (w) summative and formative program assessments.

Sweeny emphasized that each of these components is important. However, he recommended a gradual implementation of the components by programs to avoid becoming overwhelmed by the process. Sweeny (2001) also suggested that program developers try different components over a period of time to see which of these works best in a particular situation or school.

Though little research has been done to determine the effectiveness of beginning teacher mentoring and induction programs, several studies have determined that these programs have a positive effect on new teachers (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Jones, 2004). In a recent study Jones compared two mentoring models designed to assist beginning teachers. One group of beginning teachers was assigned to in-house mentors, who were also teachers within the district. A second group of beginning teachers was assigned to full-time mentors, who were not currently teaching. Jones noted that though the beginning teachers who had

full-time mentors reported the perception of having more support, the findings of the study suggested that there were no differences in the effectiveness between the two groups related to the improvement in teaching skills. Jones concluded that both the full-time and the in-house beginning teacher mentoring models had positive effects on the study's participants.

Mentoring program effectiveness is difficult to measure. Although the programs vary greatly, research suggests that the practice of mentoring beginning teachers has a positive effect on the teachers' professional practice and retention rates (Cheng & Brown, 1992; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Jones, 2004). Therefore, the mentoring of beginning teachers is an important factor in the effort to sustain quality programming in FCS education.

### **The Need for Mentoring in FCS Education**

The family and consumer sciences profession is experiencing a shortage of teachers in many states (Bull & Cummings, 2002; Miller & Meszaros, 1996; Stout et al., 1998). There are several contributing factors that have led to this decline. The loss of institutions that provide FCS secondary education preparation is one factor that has lessened the pool of qualified teachers in the field. Another reason for the shortage is that fewer students are choosing to major in FCS education (Mimbs, 2000). The retirement of FCS teachers has also contributed to the lack of qualified teachers (Bull & Cummings).

As the field of family and consumer sciences faces teacher shortages, the longevity of teachers in the FCS education profession needs to be considered and addressed. Within the first three to five years of teaching, attrition rates for teachers are at their peak. Though pre-service teachers are given the opportunity to develop and refine their teaching knowledge and pedagogy while student teaching, many of them leave the profession soon after their careers begin (Lichty & Robles, 2003). In a recent study conducted by Mimbs (2002), FCS teachers



who were successful in their choice of careers and who experienced high job satisfaction were asked to give advice that would be beneficial to teacher educators and new teachers. The participating teachers suggested that professional development for pre-service and beginning teachers be ongoing and relevant. They also recommended that professional development opportunities be provided to meet the needs of the beginning teachers and to bring about needed change (Mimbs).

Mentoring is recognized as an important component in the preparation of successful beginning teachers. In a recent study Kvaska and Lichty (2004) found that effective mentoring practices of university supervisors made an impact on whether or not beginning FCS teachers remained in the classroom. In another study involving FCS secondary educators, Lee (1998) suggested that the enthusiasm of university faculty mentors was also a factor in the success of students seeking FCS teacher licensure. Based on their findings, Lichty and Kvaska concluded that the success of new FCS teachers is related to the adequacy of their preservice preparation, which is noted in the researchers' statement:

Teacher education programs need to be concerned about how successful their programs are in preparing education students for the realities of teaching. If the student teachers' expectations of their teaching experiences match the realities of their teaching experiences, the student will most likely find that teaching is a positive and rewarding career, and will want to remain in the teaching profession. (p. 53)

When supervisors provide student teachers with the support they need to be successful in the classroom, the pre-service teachers can become continuous learners. This allows teachers to become effective practitioners who continue to grow in their ability to teach and improve the learning environment and community (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002). Thus, these teachers

will be more likely to receive the designation of being highly qualified. As new teachers they will also be more likely to find meaning and satisfaction in their chosen career (Sergiovanni & Starratt).

As with other beginning teachers, feelings of isolation are very apparent in FCS classrooms. Lichty and Robles (2003) in a recent study involving new FCS emergency permit teachers discovered that almost half of the participants worked in single teacher departments. Through in-depth interviews with these new teachers, Lichty and Robles pinpointed problems that were encountered during the first year of teaching. Following conversations with the new FCS teachers, the researchers noted, “They felt overwhelmed and experienced frustration, fear, nervousness, isolation, insecurity, and exhaustion” (Lichty & Robles, p. 26). Lichty and Robles recommended that new FCS emergency permit teachers be assigned to mentors before the school year begins to give these new teachers much needed support. Lichty and Robles also suggested that the mentor teachers be experienced, trained, and paid so that they could provide effective support for the newly hired teachers.

Though the teacher shortage in FCS education has several contributing factors (Mimbs, 2000), the length of time teachers remain in the classrooms needs to be considered. Lichty and Kvaska (2004) suggested that effective mentoring programs provide much needed support for beginning FCS teachers. They recognized mentoring as a very important component in the retention of beginning teachers.

### **Beginning Teacher Mentoring Models**

Several mentoring models are currently being used throughout the nation to support novice teachers. Some of these have been specifically designed to assist beginning teachers during the induction phase of their careers. Other mentoring programs have been developed

to meet the needs of all teachers. A variety of delivery techniques have been used in the implementation of these models.

### *Technology-based Mentoring Models*

Mentoring models that involve the use of technology are successfully being used to support both experienced and new teachers. Professional mentoring programs that include the use of electronic conferencing allow teachers to share concerns, practices, experiences, and educational issues (Bonk, Ehman, Hixon, & Yamagata-Lynch, 2004; Klecka, 2004; Redmond, 2002).

In a recent study Klecka (2004) used electronic conferencing as a means of support for a group of new teachers in the state of Illinois. The study involved participation of new and experienced teachers in a distributed community of practice. Klecka determined that because of the online conversations initiated by participants, a community of practice was begun. The teachers involved in this community discussed with each other questions and concerns about their classroom practices. The researcher reported that the teachers who were involved in the project shared their own experiences, practices, and perspectives. It was also observed that the teachers assisted each other in finding solutions to concerns. Klecka determined that the distributed mentoring model is useful in fostering needed change, because of the model's ability to transcend district and cultural boundaries.

A professional development program called *Teacher Institute for Curriculum Knowledge about the Integration of Technology (TICKIT)* was developed by Bonk et al. (2004) to increase peer support and communication among rural teachers in Indiana. Asynchronous Web-based conferencing was used by teachers to post their progress in the integration of technology into their teaching. Though the participating teachers were

involved in experiences such as online debates and reading reflections, they reported enjoying the “critical friend” activities most. According to Bonk et al., the interaction with critical friends involved mentoring and sharing experiences and issues related to the integration of technology into the curriculum. The analysis of the critical friend postings indicated that more peer support was shown when compared to the other online tasks and activities associated with the program. Bonk et al. concluded that the critical friend technological activities promoted emotional support among the teachers who participated in the study.

In a recent study of technology-augmented mentoring for beginning teachers Redmond (2002) focused on a program called *Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment* (BTSA). According to Redmond, this program was established to address the severe teacher shortage in the state of California. BTSA was designed to support new teachers by providing classes in professional development and by providing mentoring for new teachers. Because the need for mentors exceeded the supply, mentors worked with several new teachers through the use of technology. Mentors were assigned a group of approximately 20 new teachers. The interaction between the mentor and the new teachers was through e-mail and online group discussions. In a study of one group of new teachers that was assigned to an online mentor teacher, Redmond found that individual issues and classroom practices were successfully addressed. She concluded that the careful use of technology-augmented mentoring made a positive impact on the professional development of new teachers. Like Bonk et al. (2004), Redmond suggested that technology-augmented mentoring practices provide avenues for teachers to share practices, concerns, and ideas beyond the boundaries of their schools and school districts.

In 2002 the National Science Foundation awarded a grant for the development of an innovative electronic mentoring program to assist new secondary science teachers (*E-mentoring for Student Success* [EMSS], 2007). The EMSS model was first piloted in California and Montana. In 2006 new teachers in sixteen affiliate states became eligible to participate in the program. This model provides an opportunity for online networking between beginning and experienced science teachers, and focuses on professional development through dialogue. The program also provides online mentoring for beginning science teachers by trained mentors in their subject areas. The online modules focus on content and pedagogy. Through the EMSS program, teachers are given access to scientists in the field. Also, training is provided for the mentors, the scientists, and the facilitators. EMSS matches the beginning teacher with a trained mentor, who teaches the same subject at the same grade level. The goals of the program are to provide science resources, develop a community of science teachers, and improve student achievement (EMSS).

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Career Education Division, has provided a mentoring program for new and returning teachers since 2003 (Cochran & Reese, 2007). The program matches veteran teachers and beginning teachers as mentors and mentees. According to Cochran and Reese, the first year program focuses on content standards, and the second year focuses on improving instruction. The Missouri Center for Career Education (MCCE) implemented the mentoring program to meet the needs of beginning teachers and to retain quality teachers (Missouri Center for Career Education [MCCE], n.d.). From the MCCE Web-site mentors and mentees are able to access and download a new teacher notebook, a mentoring notebook, and related materials. The mentoring program also includes a mentoring blog, where teachers can find a link to their

own program areas. On each program area Web page, teachers can post notes, questions, or comments on their own content or professional area blog (MCCE).

### ***FCS Education Mentoring Models***

Few models for mentoring beginning teachers in FCS secondary education have been discussed in the literature. Some of the models are directed by FCS state departments of education and university teacher educators. The delivery of some of these programs involves the use of technology. Effectiveness research data seem to be lacking in the area of mentoring beginning FCS teachers.

A mentoring model has been developed by the FCS teacher educators in Kentucky to support both new and returning teachers (Sikora & Alexander, 2004). Researchers worked with both new and returning teachers to the FCS secondary teaching profession. The model was based on the results of informal needs assessments collected from new FCS teachers. The model included a series of workshops that took place over a period of one year. The focus of the workshops was on the unique needs of new and returning FCS teachers in Kentucky. As the year progressed teacher educators met on a regular basis to review evaluations and to plan for the future direction of the workshops. The researchers found that the new teacher workshop model was a success and reported that, “all of the evaluations were positive” (Sikora & Alexander, 2004, p. 51). Sikora and Alexander also noted that the new teachers were especially excited about the sharing sessions, where ideas were shared and connections with other FCS teachers were made. The authors of the study reported that the beginning teachers who participated in the study realized that other teachers were experiencing similar issues and problems in the classroom. As a result of the sharing sessions, teachers were eager to return to their classrooms and implement strategies and ideas

they had learned from the other teachers (Sikora & Alexander). Sikora and Alexander concluded that though the professional development workshop was a success, a few problems were encountered during the implementation. One of the issues involved the distance that some of the teachers had to travel to attend the workshops. To address this issue the researchers considered using alternative delivery methods in planning future beginning teacher workshops (Sikora & Alexander).

A recent study conducted by Manley, Sweaney, and Valente (2000) indicated that technology is frequently used by FCS classroom teachers. Results of their research also showed that FCS teachers often use technology and its applications in the development and implementation of FCS curriculum. It was determined that, “FCS educators seem to be the leaders in integrating technology into the FCS curriculum and professional environment” (Manley et al., p. 28). The authors suggested that FCS educators could be leaders in the area of technology integration if this trend continued. It was also determined that the use of technology is critical to the profession’s future. The authors described technology as an important mechanism for addressing educational gaps on a nationwide scale.

Because FCS is experiencing a shortage of teachers, the researchers were hopeful that the use of technology would allow teachers to quickly access the most recent information and reduce the time spent planning and preparing curriculum (Manley et al., 2000). As a result of using technology to make lesson preparation more efficient, FCS teachers could become more satisfied with their career choice. By using technology in the communication process among teachers, feelings of isolation that many new FCS teachers experience could be reduced or eliminated.

### ***FCS Professional Organizations' Mentoring Models***

#### ***Phi Upsilon Omicron Honor Society Professional Mentoring***

Phi Upsilon Omicron is an honor society that promotes academic excellence and leadership in the FCS profession. Conclaves are held every other year to provide leadership training and professional development opportunities for undergraduate members. Susan Rickards, Executive Director of Phi Upsilon Omicron, explained that at conclaves students are matched with alumni who are willing to mentor the collegiate members. Rickards stressed the fact that leadership development and mentoring are important components of the organization's mission (S. Rickards, personal communication, November 6, 2006). Articles are published in the organizations' publication, *The Candle*, that address mentoring practices.

#### ***American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Professional Mentoring***

The Elementary, Secondary and Adult Education (ESAE) section of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) provides a link on the AAFCS Web site to the *Kappa Omicron Nu Self-managed Mentoring Model*. This model provides a step-by-step self-directed process that can be completed by mentors and mentees. The model is a valuable tool for those who are seeking a mentor. The program assists the participant in the preparation of an action plan that involves self-mentoring. The program provides tools that one can use to direct one's life or situation. One of the program goals is to teach participants to become more competent in selecting a mentor. A second program goal is to help professionals become confident in their roles as mentors for others (AAFCS, 2006). This self-directed model could be used by anyone who wants to be mentored or to become a mentor.



### ***Kappa Omicron Nu Mentoring Module***

Mitstifer, Wenberg, and Schatz (1994) have developed, *Mentoring: The Human Touch*, a self-directed mentoring module. This model was produced as an outgrowth of a Kappa Omicron Nu workshop designed to teach students to manage their own mentoring programs. The module guides participants through a series of steps that help them identify desired changes, select personal mentoring goals, and devise an action plan for self-directed mentoring (Mitstifer et al.).

Several mentoring models were described in the module that could be useful guides for individuals to follow while developing his or her mentoring plan. These models are useful tools for organizations, academic units, and students as they develop mentoring programs that best fit their individual needs:

***Model I: Narrative mentoring plan.*** The *Narrative Mentoring Plan* was developed to encourage dietetic students to remain in the profession. The students are directed to devise a plan involving mentoring to address their own career development needs. This model is proposed as a course assignment for dietetic students to lead them through the process of making career choices, resolving problems, expanding and gaining knowledge, and developing professional strategies. Using a narrative format, dietetic students prepare written sections on their backgrounds, their career needs, specific goals, and strategies for achieving their career goals. After writing the narrative, the students work to accomplish their goals and evaluate their success in accomplishing what they set out to do. Working with mentors in the dietetic field is incorporated into the narrative plan by each student participant (Mitstifer et al., 1994).

***Model II: Career fair.*** The *Career Fair* model involves preparing for and presenting a career fair. The planning process and the actual event encourage faculty and students to work together toward a goal. Students and faculty serve on committees, which allows for mentoring between the two groups. The members of the committees work together to plan and present the career event. During the career fair, students use their self-mentoring narratives as handouts for recruitment purposes (Mitstifer et al., 1994).

***Model III: Mentoring field experience.*** The *Mentoring Field Experience* model is used to prepare dietetic interns for their profession. Mentors, who have successfully worked with students in the past, volunteer to host mentees. Professors match the mentors to the mentees. The local dietitians, who volunteer to be mentors, do this as a service to the profession and receive no monetary compensation. Both the mentors and the mentees are directed on how to make the relationships productive and successful by the university professor. The professor visits with the mentors and mentees and explains the packet of mentoring procedures and guidelines. While students are involved in the field experience, they complete a variety of assignments that help them learn about the professional mentor and the dietetics' profession (Mitstifer et.al., 1994).

***Model IV: Peer mentoring program.*** The *Peer Mentoring Program* model is organized around a community of peers. The program recommends that students be mentored by four other students. The four peers come from the class rank of senior, junior, sophomore, and freshman. As the senior member graduates a new freshman member is added to the mentoring group. The peer mentoring groups meet on a regular basis for planned interaction. At the end of the year the groups evaluate the success of the mentoring program and use this feedback as a tool for program improvement (Mitstifer et al., 1994).

Each of the four mentoring models developed by Mitstifer et al. (1994) is an excellent tool for the beginning professional. Though none of the four models specifically address the needs of beginning FCS teachers, elements from each model could be incorporated into mentoring programs designed to assist new and returning FCS teachers.

Though each of the FCS professional organizations' mentoring models is useful for mentoring individuals and groups, none is specifically designed to mentor beginning FCS teachers. Also, no data have been reported to assess the effectiveness of these programs. Elements of these mentoring models could be applied when working with beginning FCS teachers.

## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The primary purpose of this study was to identify existing programs designed to mentor beginning secondary teachers in family and consumer sciences (FCS) education. Although some FCS mentoring programs exist in FCS education, additional beginning teacher mentoring programs would be very beneficial and could lead to a decrease in the exodus of FCS beginning teachers from the classrooms (Lichty & Robles, 2003; Mimbs, 2000). Retaining beginning teachers in FCS education is essential if quality secondary programming is to be sustained (Lichty & Robles; Mimbs). Therefore, the secondary purpose of this study was to develop a new model for mentoring beginning secondary teachers in FCS education. The design of this model was developed to provide essential support for FCS beginning secondary teachers.

The objectives of this research were specifically selected to assist in the accomplishment of both the primary and secondary purposes. These objectives were to:

1. identify needs and concerns of beginning family and consumer sciences teachers.
2. identify existing mentoring and induction programs in family and consumer sciences education at the state and national levels.
  - a. examine the delivery systems used in existing mentoring and induction programs in family and consumer sciences education.
  - b. analyze existing effectiveness data of family and consumer sciences mentoring and induction programs.
3. identify components of effective mentoring for beginning teachers through a review of literature.

4. conceptualize a model that meets the needs identified for mentoring beginning family and consumer sciences teachers.

It was determined by the researcher that a survey instrument and focus groups would provide the most useful data for this study. The development of the focus group questions and the survey questionnaire was based on the study's identified research purposes and objectives. A cross-sectional survey design was selected to identify elements of existing mentoring programs, describe mentoring programs and practices, and to understand the perceptions of the need for mentoring programs. The survey questionnaire was developed to identify existing mentoring and induction programs in family and consumer sciences education, and to look at how the existing mentoring and induction programs were delivered and evaluated for effectiveness. A focus group interview with beginning FCS secondary teachers was selected as the most effective way to determine the needs and concerns of beginning teachers. The focus group questions were designed to gather data from participants on their perceptions of what it is like to be a beginning secondary teacher in FCS education. A second focus group made up of FCS professionals was determined by the researcher to be the most effective way to develop the components of a new mentoring model. The focus group questions were designed and used with the second focus group to assist in the conceptualization of a new mentoring model for beginning secondary FCS teachers.

### ***Participant Selection***

Survey participants were selected based on their knowledge of FCS secondary mentoring and induction programs and practices that are in place at the state and national levels. The focus groups' participants were chosen based on their familiarity and experience

with the needs and concerns of beginning FCS secondary teachers. The target groups included FCS teacher educators, FCS departments of education program administrators, and beginning FCS secondary teachers. The names and electronic mailing addresses of FCS teacher educators and administrators were obtained from a variety of sources, including the National Association of Teacher Educators for Family and Consumer Sciences (NATEFACS) membership list, the National Association of State Administrators for Family and Consumer Sciences (NASAFACS) membership list, and the NATEFACS fall conference contact and participant lists. The FCS beginning teachers were identified by Suellen Ward, Arkansas Department of Workforce Education FCS Program Administrator, through personal contact on July 30, 2007 (S. Ward, personal communication, July 30, 2007). It was determined that each of the identified beginning teachers were all graduates of a southern university's FCS education program.

The FCS departments of education program administrators who were members of NASAFACS, the FCS teacher educators who were members of the NATEFACS, and the FCS participants and contacts for the NATEFACS fall conference composed the target population for the survey. These participants were selected based on their knowledge of FCS beginning secondary teachers and programs. Both the teacher educators and program administrators often implement mentoring and induction programs at the state level. The NASAFACS and the NATEFACS lists were used because they were accessible and included the most extensive lists of program administrators and teacher educators available.

Two focus groups were included to explore the purposes and objectives of this study. Beginning FCS teachers, who were currently teaching secondary FCS and had taught three years or less, composed the target population for the FCS beginning teacher focus group.

Beginning teachers who were teaching within a 30 mile radius of a certain southern university were selected as the focus group sample population. Three FCS professionals and teacher educators were selected as participants in a second focus group based on their knowledge of FCS secondary teachers, curriculum, and programs. This focus group was convened to assist in the conceptualization of the new mentoring model.

Family and consumer sciences beginning teacher mentoring programs, practices, and perceptions were investigated using several research methods. The data collection process included multiple sources of information. A cross-sectional survey and two focus groups were used to collect the data.

### ***Survey Instrument Development***

The cross-sectional survey questionnaire was used to acquire information about mentoring and induction programs, practices, and perceptions. This design was selected to collect data that reflected the participants' perceptions and practices regarding the mentoring of FCS secondary teachers. The FCS administrators who were members of NASAFACS, the FCS teacher educators who were members of NATEFACS, and the FCS teacher educators who were on the NATEFACS fall conference list were asked to participate in the survey to provide national assessment data on FCS mentoring and induction programs, practices, and perceptions. These lists represented a majority of the FCS state department of education administrators, and a large number of the teacher educators nationwide, making the coverage of the sample population adequate (Creswell, 2002). This sample population was selected to provide a depiction of mentoring in FCS secondary education, and not for comparison purposes.

The survey questions were specifically selected to meet the goals and objectives of this study. Questions were prepared to identify existing FCS beginning teacher mentoring programs. Survey questions concerning mentoring and induction program features and practices were developed based on effective mentoring and induction practices cited in the review of literature. FCS administrators and FCS teacher educators in each state were asked if beginning teacher mentoring and induction programs currently exist in their states, institutions, or schools. If mentoring and induction programs were being implemented specifically for beginning FCS teachers, participants were asked to describe aspects of the programs. Questions regarding the duration of the mentoring and induction programs, the delivery of the programs, the administrative support of the programs, the assessment of the programs, and the features of the programs were asked. Survey participants were asked to describe aspects of these mentoring programs that were working well and to report available effectiveness data. Respondents were also invited to share program information for the purposes of this study. Survey questions were designed to correspond with each of the purposes and objectives defined in this study. Table 1 shows the correlation of the research study purposes and the research study objectives with the survey questions that are listed in Appendix B:

The study's purposes and objectives were correlated with the survey questions as follows:



Table 1  
*Correlation of Research Purposes and Objectives with Survey Questions*

<b>Research Purposes and Objectives</b>	<b>Survey Question Item Number</b>
<b>Research Purposes</b>	
Purpose 1: Identification of existing programs	3-4
Purpose 2: Model Development	16-17
<b>Research Objectives</b>	
Objective 1: Identification of FCS beginning teacher needs and concerns	14-15; beginning teacher focus group
Objective 2: Identification of existing FCS state and national mentoring programs	2-4; 18
a. Examination of existing mentoring and induction delivery systems	3-9; 11-15; 18
b. Analysis of existing FCS mentoring and induction program effectiveness data	5; 9-10; 12-13; 18
Objective 3: Identification of components of effective mentoring for beginning teachers through literature review	(see literature review)
Objective 4: Conceptualization of a model that meets identified needs for mentoring FCS teachers	13 - 18

Table 2 – Relationship between the Purposes and Objectives and the Survey Questions

The survey instrument was developed and field tested by the researcher, following the receipt of Iowa State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. As a pilot, the survey was electronically mailed to three FCS teacher educators on August 10, 2007. The respondents agreed that the survey instrument thoroughly covered the purposes and objectives of the study. The pilot group also suggested mechanical and editorial changes, which were made before the survey was electronically mailed to the sample population. Because the pilot group provided feedback on the questionnaire prior to the study, these participants were excluded from the final sample.

Prior to conducting the study, IRB approval was sought and received from Iowa State University and a southern state university (Appendix A). It is necessary to have all research with human subjects scrutinized for possible negative effects on the research subjects. Because the design of this study involved minimal risk to human subjects, an exemption was granted by the Iowa State University Instructional Review Board on June 18, 2007. Minor modifications were made in the survey questionnaire following a review of the instrument by the researcher's program of study committee members. Question number 5 on the survey instrument was revised to include "uncertain" as a response option. Mechanical changes were also made in survey items. The survey was then resubmitted to the Iowa State University IRB board with these modifications. The modified study was declared exempt on July 11, 2007 (Appendix A).

### ***Data Collection***

Both the FCS departments of education administrators and the FCS teacher educators were electronically mailed a cover letter along with the questionnaire. The participants were asked to answer a short list of questions containing closed-ended and open-ended items in an

effort to explore the respondents' perceptions and knowledge of mentoring and induction programs in FCS education. Although an informed consent statement was sent along with a letter and the survey, there was no collection of signatures due to the fact that the survey was administered electronically. Though the design of the study was deemed to be exempt by the Iowa State University's Instructional Review Board (IRB), the researcher followed practices consistent with those designed to protect the rights of participants. Participants in the study were under no obligation to answer any of the questions. The participants' privacy was protected and their answers were reported anonymously. Publication of the study would not include identifying information of the participants, and the information collected was kept confidential.

The first mailing was electronically forwarded to the 93 FCS state departments of education program administrators, who were members of NASAFACS, on August 16, 2007. The survey questions were prepared using SurveyMonkey software (SurveyMonkey, n.d.). An introductory letter, the survey questions, and the informed consent document were mailed. To increase the response rate, a second mailing was sent to the FCS program administrators on September 3, 2007. On October 2, 2007 a third mailing was electronically mailed to the FCS departments of education administrators who had not responded to the first two mailings. A total of 21 mailings to the sample group were returned as undeliverable. These were removed from the sample population, bringing the total of possible participants to 72 program administrators.

On September 12, 2007, the FCS teacher educators were electronically mailed a cover letter, the informed consent document, and the link to the survey. The sample included 86 FCS teacher educators, who were included on the NATEFACS mailing lists. To increase the

rate of return a second mailing was sent on September 19, 2007, to the teacher educators who had not responded to the first mailing. A short note was included in the electronic mailing referring to this mailing as the second opportunity for participation in the research study. On October 1, 2007, a third mailing was sent to the teacher educators who had not responded. A written invitation was included in this mailing in addition to the letter of consent and the survey link. The number of electronic mailings that were returned as undeliverable was 11. These were removed from the sample population, bringing the total to 75 possible participants.

One objective of this study was to identify needs and concerns of beginning secondary family and consumer sciences teachers. One of the ways this objective was addressed was to include a focus group consisting of beginning FCS secondary teachers. Teachers who had taught three years or less and who taught within a thirty-mile radius of a particular southern university were selected as the target population. These teachers were selected because they were identified as beginning teachers as defined by the researcher for the purposes of this study. These teachers were also located near the southern university where the researcher was a teacher educator. From the target population six beginning teachers were contacted to participate in the focus group. Each of these was a graduate of the southern university's FCS education program. Four of the six beginning teachers agreed to participate in the research study. Two of the beginning FCS teachers were unable to participate due to scheduling conflicts.

The focus group was conducted in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at a southern university campus on August 17, 2007. A letter explaining the purposes of the study was prepared and electronically mailed to the target population. Prior to beginning the

focus group questioning, participants were given time to read and sign the informed consent document. The purposes of the study were explained to the group. After agreeing to participate in the study, the sample group signed the informed consent document. The beginning teachers were then interviewed using a short list of questions as a guide to collect their perceptions regarding teaching secondary FCS and mentoring practices. The questions that were developed and used to gain insight into the experiences, challenges, and mentoring perceptions of beginning FCS teachers included:

1. Tell me about your experiences as a beginning FCS teacher.
2. Describe your greatest challenge(s) as a beginning FCS teacher.
3. Tell me about any mentoring experiences or relationships that have been helpful to you as a beginning teacher.
4. Describe some of the ways you are being helped with your teaching.
5. What would be an ideal way for you as a beginning teacher to receive support?
6. What kinds of mentoring would you feel comfortable using or participating in?
7. Would you be receptive to the use of on-line journaling and other technology based mentoring practices?

The focus group session was audio-taped and the researcher asked questions and took notes during the session. The focus group interview procedures that were used were recommended by Creswell (2002). Each participant was asked to state his or her name before discussing a question to assist in the transcription process. The interviewees were encouraged to respond to each of the questions. The participants responded to all of the questions and interacted with each other during the process. The focus group interviews lasted for approximately two hours. Following the interviews the participants were given ten

dollars each to cover their travel expenses. After the transcription was completed, the data were explored to gain a general sense of the meaning. The transcript was read several times by the researcher and memos, phrases, and concepts were written in the margins. Brackets were placed around text segments and codes were used to describe segments. The codes were highlighted in color according to themes that seemed to be emerging. The coded words were then arranged together in clusters (Creswell, 2002). Themes were then developed from the data based on one of the research study's objectives, which included the identification of needs and concerns of beginning secondary FCS teachers.

The focus group coded transcript was sent to the focus group participants on September 25, 2007. Respondents were asked to review the notes, interpretations, and themes. After reviewing the notes and the themes recorded by the researcher, each of the participants contacted the researcher to explain whether or not the transcription and interpretation were accurate. Each of the participants agreed that the researcher's interpretations, suggested themes, and conclusions were correct.

A second focus group of FCS teacher education professionals was formed to assist in the conceptualization of a mentoring model to assist FCS beginning secondary teachers. These participants were selected based on their knowledge of beginning FCS secondary teachers and FCS mentoring and induction programs. The group included two university FCS teacher educators, who both had experience as FCS secondary teachers and experience as supervisors of student teachers. A third participant was a university FCS instructor, who had previously taught FCS classes at the high school level. This focus group was conducted on September 14, 2007, in a conference room in Little Rock, Arkansas. The researcher asked the focus group participants the following questions to begin the discussion:

- What are the needs and concerns of beginning FCS teachers?
- What can be done about meeting the needs of beginning FCS teachers?
- How can mentoring programs assist beginning FCS teachers adjust to teaching?
- What needs to be included in a mentoring program for FCS beginning teachers?
- What types of delivery systems could be used in mentoring programs?
- How can FCS beginning teacher mentoring programs be administered?
- What new ways of mentoring can you imagine working?

While the focus group was discussing these questions, the researcher recorded the responses. The focus group interviews were completed in one hour. Following the focus group session, the responses were reviewed and coded by the researcher. The text was labeled in the margins of the pages with code words. The segments that related to the code words were then highlighted in colors and clustered together. The text was then divided and placed under headings. These headings were then reduced to form themes that were related to one of the purposes of this study. This major purpose was to conceptualize a new model for mentoring beginning FCS teachers.

On September 16, 2007, the teacher educator focus group members met a second time in Little Rock. The researcher's themes and interpretations were identified and presented to the participants for review. The participants discussed the themes and suggested new ways to mentor and to deliver mentoring and induction programs to FCS beginning secondary teachers. These ideas and suggestions were later used by the researcher as one source in the conceptualization of a new model for mentoring beginning FCS secondary teachers.

## **CHAPTER IV: RESULTS**

### **Overview**

The primary purpose of this study was to identify existing programs designed to mentor beginning secondary teachers in family and consumer sciences (FCS) education. The secondary purpose of this study was to develop a model for mentoring beginning secondary teachers in FCS education. To achieve these purposes the following objectives were addressed. The specific objectives of this research study were to:

1. identify needs and concerns of beginning family and consumer sciences teachers.
2. identify existing mentoring and induction programs in family and consumer sciences education at the state and national levels.
  - a. examine the delivery systems used in existing mentoring and induction programs in FCS education.
  - b. analyze existing effectiveness data of FCS mentoring and induction programs.
3. identify components of effective mentoring for beginning teachers through a review of literature.
4. conceptualize a model that meets the needs identified for mentoring beginning teachers in FCS education.

### **Survey Sample and Focus Groups**

Identification of mentoring and induction programs that exist in FCS education at the state and national levels was addressed by sending a survey questionnaire to FCS educators who were involved with beginning teachers. The survey was electronically mailed to a total



of 164 individuals, who were identified as either FCS teacher educators or FCS state department of education administrators. Of the 164 targeted professionals, 86 were identified as teacher educators and 93 were identified as state department of education administrators.

The survey sample group included the 93 members included on the electronic mailing list of the National Association of State Administrators in Family and Consumer Sciences (NASAFACS). An electronic mail message including an informed consent form, and a link to the survey questionnaire was sent to each administrator. A total of 21, or 22%, of the mailings to this sample group were returned as undeliverable, bringing the number of possible participants to 72 program administrators. The researcher reviewed Web sites of state departments of education to find correct electronic mailing addresses. No additional correct addresses were located.

The 86 educators, who were on the FCS teacher educator list obtained from the National Association of Teacher Educators in Family and Consumer Sciences (NATEFACS) organization, were electronically mailed a letter of invitation, an informed consent form, and a link to the survey questionnaire. Of the 86 electronic mailings sent to those on the mailing list, 11, or 13%, were returned as undeliverable. The survey was delivered to 75 teacher educators.

Sixty-five FCS administrators and teacher educators from 32 different states responded to the mailings, representing a 44% return rate. Of the 65 respondents, 55% indicated that they were FCS teacher educators and 33% indicated that they were FCS state administrators, while 12.5% selected the “other” category and explained that they were Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) state advisors or state directors. Of the 65 educators who began the survey, nine did not totally complete the

questionnaire. In an effort to increase the completion rate, the survey was designed to allow participants an opportunity to return to the survey to complete the questions at a later time. To increase the response rate follow-up letters were electronically mailed on three different dates.

The survey instrument was prepared using SurveyMonkey software (SurveyMonkey, n.d). The questions were formulated, based on both the research purposes and objectives, and the review of literature. Each of the survey questions was correlated with the research purposes and objectives. The first two survey questions asked participants about demographical information. The second group of questions asked the sample if their states, schools, institutions, or organizations had mentoring and induction programs specifically for FCS teachers. If the respondents indicated that there were no programs that were specific to FCS beginning teachers in their geographical areas, they were to proceed to survey question number 15. Questions 15 through 18 asked for responses that would give the researcher insight into programs and practices that could be valuable in assisting beginning FCS teachers.

Two focus groups were convened to gain insight into the needs and concerns of beginning FCS teachers, and to discuss how these needs and concerns could best be met. Four beginning FCS teachers, who had taught three years or less, composed the first focus group. This group met on the southern university's campus in August 2007. The focus group participants responded to a set of prepared questions to give the researcher information on what it is like to be a beginning FCS teacher. These participants described the needs and the challenges faced by beginning teachers. This group also discussed ways beginning teachers could be assisted by mentors and other professionals. A second focus group

composed of two FCS teacher educators and one FCS college instructor and former secondary teacher was formed to discuss what could be done to help beginning FCS teachers. Ideas and suggestions formulated by this focus group were used in the development of a new model for mentoring beginning FCS teachers.

### **Summary of Survey Findings**

The following descriptions and tables summarize the findings of the survey. To view the actual survey instrument see Appendix B. Participants whose states, schools, or institutions had mentoring and induction programs in place to specifically assist beginning FCS secondary teachers were asked to move forward to question number 15. Therefore, the responses to questions 3 through 14 were fewer than the responses to questions one and two, and 15 through 18.

#### **Survey Question #1:**

**Choose the option that best identifies your position in FCS education.**

Thirty-five participants, representing 55% of the total respondents, described themselves as FCS teacher educators. Twenty-one, or 33% of the respondents, identified themselves as FCS state departments of education administrators. Eight, or 13%, of the respondents marked the “other category”. Five of these participants described themselves as Future Community and Career Leaders of America (FCCLA) advisors, while one identified himself or herself as a FCS teacher, and another described himself or herself as a state FCS director. Another respondent described himself or herself as a department chair and FCS teacher educator. See Table 1 for a description of positions held by the study participants.

Table 1

*Professional Positions held by FCS Educators (N=64)*

Positions held	Number of respondents	Percentage of total (%)
FCS Teacher Educator	35	55
FCS State Department of Education Administrators	21	33
Other	8	13

### **Survey Question #2:**

#### **Your FCS position is located in which state?**

FCS state departments of education administrators and FCS teacher educators representing 32 states responded to the survey. It was indicated on the NASAFACS membership list that four states had no FCS administrative staff, therefore these states were not included in the sample state departments education administrators. However, no information was available to indicate which states did not have teacher educators who were members of the NATEFACS organization. Sixty-three of the 65 participants responded to this question. Table 2 indicates the states that responded to the survey and the number of respondents per state.

Table 2

*States Represented by Respondents and the Responses per State (N=63)*

States responding	Number of respondents per state
Alaska	1
Arkansas	3

*Table 2 (continued)*

States responding	Number of respondents per state
Arizona	1
California	1
Colorado	3
Connecticut	3
Florida	1
Georgia	2
Idaho	1
Illinois	2
Indiana	2
Iowa	3
Kentucky	3
Louisiana	1
Maine	1
Michigan	1
Missouri	1
Nevada	1
Nebraska	2
New Hampshire	1
New Mexico	1
New York	1
North Carolina	4
North Dakota	2
Ohio	4
Pennsylvania	1
South Dakota	4
Tennessee	1
Texas	2
Utah	3
Virginia	3
Washington	3

### Survey Question #3:

**Identify which mentoring programs your state, institution, school, or organization has in place to specifically mentor FCS teachers.**

To this survey question respondents could select more than one response to identify all mentoring programs that were in place in their states, institutions, schools, or organizations. Forty-nine percent of the respondents indicated that their states, institutions, or schools had a mentoring program in place for beginning FCS teachers. Mentoring programs for all FCS teachers were said to be in place in 10% of the states, institutions, or schools. Of the respondents, 18% said that no mentoring programs existed specifically for FCS teachers in their states, institutions, or schools. The “other” category was selected by 44% of the respondents. Of those marking the “other” category many indicated that general mentoring programs were available at the state and district levels to mentor beginning teachers. One person responded by writing, “Some, not all school districts provide mentoring for new teachers. There is great variation statewide”. None of those who marked the “other” category indicated that there were FCS programs in their states specifically designed to mentor beginning FCS teachers. Table 3 describes the types of programs that were in place to mentor FCS teachers.

Table 3

#### *Types of Mentoring Programs in Place for FCS Teachers (N=63)*

Types of mentoring programs	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents (%)
Mentoring for beginning FCS teachers	31	49
Mentoring for all FCS teachers	6	9

*Table 3 (continued)*

Types of mentoring programs	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents (%)
No mentoring programs for FCS teachers	11	18
Other	15	24

**Survey Question #4****Does your state, institution, school, or organization provide induction programs that are designed specifically for beginning teachers in FCS education?**

Forty-one percent of the FCS teacher educators and FCS state administrators revealed that no programs were in place in their states, institutions, or schools that provided induction specifically for beginning FCS teachers, while 37% indicated that induction programs for FCS beginning teachers were in place in their states, institutions, or schools. As shown in Table 4, the remaining 22% of the respondents marked the “other” category. Those marking “other” indicated that all beginning teachers in the state and school districts participated in an induction program. One teacher stated that a new induction program for FCS teachers would be implemented during the 2007 – 2008 school year.

Table 4

*Induction Programs Designed for Beginning FCS Secondary Teachers (N=63)*

Induction programs	Number	Percent of respondents (%)
No induction programs for FCS beginning teachers	24	41
Induction programs for FCS Beginning teachers	27	37
Other	12	22

*Note.* N = number of respondents

**Survey Question #5:**

**Please indicate by marking the response that best indicates the degree to which the following statements describe the FCS mentoring /induction program(s) that are in place in your state, institution, school, or organization to assist beginning teachers.**

Participants whose states, schools, or institutions had mentoring and induction programs that were in place to specifically assist beginning secondary teachers in FCS education were asked to respond to this survey question. Those who did not have programs that were specific to FCS secondary beginning teachers were asked to move forward to question number 15. Thirty-two of the survey participants responded to this question. Respondents were asked to choose the item response that indicated the degree to which the statements described programs in their states, institutions, school, or organizations. Respondents were directed to describe these mentoring programs by selecting response options on a Likert scale. The response options listed categories that portrayed the degree to which the statements described the mentoring and induction programs. These options included strongly agree, agree, uncertain, not available, disagree, and strongly disagree.

The following item numbers refer to the survey statements that describe the FCS mentoring and induction programs that were in place in states, schools, institutions, or organizations. Table 5 shows the nominal scale responses to each of the items in survey question number five.

**Item #1: FCS mentoring programs have reduced the rate of attrition of beginning FCS teachers.**

Thirty-one percent of the 32 respondents agreed that FCS mentoring programs have reduced the rate of attrition of beginning FCS teachers in their particular states, schools,



institutions, or organizations, while 63% were uncertain or reported that the statement did not apply to their programs. Six percent strongly disagreed with the statement.

**Item #2: FCS mentoring and induction programs have assisted FCS beginning teachers in improving practice.**

Of the respondents, 88% either agreed or strongly agreed that FCS mentoring and induction programs have assisted FCS beginning teachers in improving practice. Ten percent were uncertain or marked that the statement did not apply. Only 3% disagreed or strongly disagreed that FCS mentoring and induction programs have assisted FCS beginning teachers in the improvement of practice in their particular situations.

**Item #3: Mentoring programs that are technology-based have provided effective support for beginning FCS teachers.**

Of those responding, 41% agreed or strongly agreed that mentoring programs that are technology-based have provided effective support for beginning FCS teachers, while 6% disagreed, and 53% were uncertain or did not feel the statement was applicable to their states, schools, institutions, or organizations.

**Item #4: Mentoring and induction programs have helped beginning FCS secondary teachers feel less isolated.**

Seventy-eight percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that mentoring and induction programs have helped beginning FCS secondary teachers feel less isolated. Those that were uncertain or felt that the statement did not apply to their programs were 19%. Only 3% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that mentoring and induction programs helped beginning FCS secondary teachers feel less isolated.

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**Item #5: FCS mentors who are in the same field of study have been more helpful to FCS beginning teachers than those who are in different fields.**

Seventy-five percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that FCS mentors who were in the same field of study had been more helpful to FCS beginning teachers than those who were in different fields. Nineteen percent were uncertain or marked that the statement was not applicable to their programs, while 6% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

**Item #6: FCS teachers who are located in the same school have been more effective in assisting beginning teachers than those located in a different school.**

While 50% of those responding agreed or strongly agreed that FCS teachers who are located in the same school have been more effective in assisting beginning teachers than those located in a different school, 34% were uncertain or felt the statement did not apply to their programs, and 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

**Item #7: Mentoring beginning FCS teachers has been effective when the mentors and mentees communicate only electronically.**

Nineteen percent agreed that mentoring beginning FCS teachers had been effective when the mentors and mentees communicated only electronically. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents were uncertain if communication only by electronic means between FCS beginning teachers and mentors was effective. Nineteen percent of the respondents disagreed with this statement.

**Item #8: Mentoring FCS beginning teachers has been effective when the mentor was located in a different location or state.**

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Of the respondents, 60% indicated that they were uncertain whether or not the mentoring of FCS beginning secondary teachers had been effective when the mentor was in a different location or state than the mentee. While 16% disagreed, 23% of the respondents agreed that mentoring from another location or state had been effective for FCS beginning secondary teachers. Seven percent indicated that the statement was not applicable to their programs.

**Item #9: Mentoring and induction programs have been important factors in the success of beginning FCS teachers.**

Of those responding, 63% agreed or strongly agreed that mentoring and induction programs had been important to the success of beginning FCS teachers, while 31% were uncertain or felt the statement did not apply to their situation. Only 6% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that mentoring and induction were important to the success of beginning FCS teachers.

**Item #10: Joint planning with FCS professional groups has improved the effectiveness of beginning teacher mentoring programs.**

Thirty-eight percent of those responding either agreed or strongly agreed that joint planning with professional groups had improved the effectiveness of beginning teacher mentoring programs, while 12% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Twenty-eight percent were uncertain as to whether or not joint planning with FCS professional groups had improved the effectiveness of beginning teacher mentoring programs, and 22% marked that the statement was not applicable to their programs.

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**Item #11: Dedicated leadership and coordination of FCS mentoring programs have increased beginning teacher success.**

Sixty percent of the reporting sample either agreed or strongly agreed that dedicated leadership and coordination of FCS mentoring programs had increased beginning FCS teacher success. Twenty-five percent said that they were uncertain whether or not dedicated leadership and coordination of FCS mentoring programs had made a difference in FCS beginning teacher success, while nine percent felt the statement did not apply to their programs. Six percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that dedicated leadership and coordination of mentoring programs had made a difference in the success of beginning FCS teachers. The data that were collected in survey question number five is shown in Table 5.

Table 5  
*Perceived Effects of FCS Mentoring and Induction Programs on FCS Beginning Teachers in States, Institutions, Schools, or Organizations (N=32)*

Descriptions of FCS Mentoring/Induction Programs	Percent (%) Strongly Disagree	Percent (%) Disagree	Percent (%) Uncertain	Percent (%) Not Applicable	Percent (%) Agree	Percent (%) Strongly Agree
1. FCS mentoring programs have reduced attrition	6	0	60	3	28	0
2. FCS mentoring and induction programs have assisted beginning FCS teachers in improving practice	3	0	7	3	72	16
3. Technology based programs provided effective support for FCS beginning teachers	3	3	44	9	35	6
4. Mentoring and induction programs helped beginning FCS teachers feel less isolated	3	0	13	6	55	23

Table 5 (continued)

<b>Descriptions of FCS Mentoring/Induction Programs</b>	<b>Percent (%) Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Percent (%) Disagree</b>	<b>Percent (%) Uncertain</b>	<b>Percent (%) Not Applicable</b>	<b>Percent (%) Agree</b>	<b>Percent (%) Strongly Agree</b>
5. Mentors in the field are more helpful to FCS beginning teachers than those outside the field	3	3	13	6	37	38
6. Mentors in the same school more effective than those located in a different building or school	6	9	25	9	41	9
7. Mentoring has been effective when the mentor and mentee communicate only electronically	0	19	59	3	19	0
8. Mentoring has been effective when the mentor and mentee are in a different location or state.	0	16	55	6	23	0
9. FCS mentoring/induction programs have been important factors in the success of beginning FCS teachers	3	3	22	9	44	19
10. Joint planning with FCS groups has improved the effectiveness of FCS mentoring programs	3	9	28	22	22	16
11. Dedicated leadership and coordination of FCS programs has increased beginning teacher success	3	3	25	9	47	13

*Note.* N= number of responses to items 1-11 in survey question number 5.

Several of the items listed in survey question number five elicited a great deal of agreement from the participants. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents who completed question number five agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that FCS mentoring and induction programs have assisted beginning teacher in improving practice. Also, 78% agreed or strongly agreed that mentoring and induction programs have helped beginning FCS

secondary teachers feel less isolated. Seventy-five percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that FCS mentors who are in the same field of study have been more helpful to FCS beginning teachers than those in other fields. Mentoring and induction programs have been important factors to the success of beginning FCS teachers according to 63% of the respondents. Additionally, 60% of the survey participants felt that dedicated leadership and coordination of FCS mentoring programs have increased beginning teacher success.

The respondents were not certain about the effects of mentoring programs on the attrition rates of FCS beginning teachers. Also, 44% of the respondents were uncertain whether or not technology based mentoring programs have provided effective support for FCS beginning teachers in their states, program, schools, or institutions.

**Survey Question #6:**

**Which of the following best describes how beginning FCS teachers are assigned to work with mentor teachers in your state, school, institution, or organization?**

Of the respondents, 33% indicated that FCS beginning secondary teachers were assigned to any mentor teacher in any discipline within the school or district.

Only 15% reported that FCS beginning secondary teachers were assigned to FCS mentor teachers within the school or district. The “other” category was selected by

52% of the participants. Two of the respondents who marked “other” wrote that beginning

FCS teachers were in place with FCS mentor teachers if it was possible. Three other

respondents indicated that beginning FCS teachers could be assigned to FCS mentors in a nearby town or school. Two reported that beginning teachers were mentored by teacher

educators in the area, while other respondents said that the way FCS beginning teachers were placed with mentor teachers varied throughout the state.

**Survey Question #7:**

**If a FCS mentoring program is in place in your state, school, institution, or organization which of the following best describes the duration of the program:**

Most of the respondents, 86%, described the duration of the FCS beginning teacher mentoring programs in their states, schools, institutions, or organizations as lasting between one and two years. Only 4% of the respondents indicated that the mentoring programs in their states, schools, institutions, or organizations were less than one year in length. Eleven percent said that the FCS beginning teacher mentoring programs in their locations continued for more than 3 years.

Table 6

*Duration of FCS Mentoring Programs (N=28)*

Duration in years	Number of respondents	Percent of responses (%)
Less than 1	1	4
1 to 2	24	85
3 to 5	2	7
5 or more	1	4

**Survey Question #8:**

**If technology is used in the mentoring of beginning FCS teachers in your state, institution, school, or organization, which of the following types best describes this practice?**

Eighty percent of the respondents reported that their states, institutions, schools or organizations used electronic mailing list serves to mentor beginning FCS teachers. Web sites were said to be used in 28% of the states, institutions, schools, or organizations. Twelve percent of the respondents reported the use of blogs and discussion boards in mentoring beginning FCS teachers. Four percent reported no technology use, while 28% of the respondents marked the “other” category. One person who marked the “other” category said that phone calls were used by mentors and mentees, while other participants said there were no specific uses of technology in their states, institutions, schools, or organizations.

Table 7

*Technology Use in FCS Mentoring Programs (Number=25)*

Type of technology used	Response number	Response percentage
E-mail list serve	20	80
Web CT or Blackboard	4	16
Web sites	7	28
Blogs or discussion boards	3	12
Text messages	0	0
No technology used	1	4
Other	7	28

*Note.* Respondents could select more than one type of technology that was used in FCS mentoring programs.



**Survey Question #9:**

**If your state, institution, school, or organization provides mentoring/induction programs specifically for FCS beginning teachers please check all of the following practices that apply to these programs.**

Respondents marked each of the statements that applied to the secondary FCS beginning teacher programs. Of the states, institutions, schools, and organizations that provided mentoring and induction programs specifically for FCS beginning teachers, 52% indicated that these programs involved a technology component. Fifty-six percent of those reporting stated that induction programs for beginning FCS teachers were part of their programs. While 52% stated that beginning FCS teachers were paired with experienced teachers, 30% reported that beginning FCS teachers were paired with mentor teachers who were in the same school but not necessarily in the same discipline or grade level. Of the respondents, 61% agreed that programs in their states, institutions, organizations, or schools were supported by administrators, however only 30% stated that the programs were adequately funded. Both financial compensation for mentor teachers and recognition of mentors were reported by 26% of the respondents. Of those reporting, 44% said that mentoring programs in their states, institutions, organizations, or schools provided guidance, training, and support for mentors. Sixty-one percent revealed that the mentoring programs contained written program and resource materials. Fifty-two percent said that purposes and goals of the mentoring programs were clearly defined, while 39% indicated that a program evaluation component was included in the mentoring programs to check for effectiveness.

The responses indicated that planned support for mentors of beginning FCS secondary teachers was not in place in most of the states, schools, institutions, or

organizations. Selection criteria for mentor teachers were in place according to 35% of the respondents. Clear expectations for the mentor and mentee relationship were said to be in place according to 39% of the survey participants.

Professionalism was said to be an important part of the mentoring experience in some of the mentoring programs described by the respondents. Implementation of a professional development action plan for mentors and mentees was included in 30% of the reporting programs. According to the respondents, only 22% of the programs involved dedicated, collaborative leadership and planning from two or more groups of FCS professionals.

The percentage of respondents and the number of respondents who indicated that various practices were used in their particular FCS mentoring and induction programs are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

*Practices Used in FCS Mentoring and Induction Programs (N=23)*

Program practices	Number	Percent (%)
Involves a technology component	12	52
Involves an induction component	13	57
Pairs beginning FCS teacher with experienced mentors	12	52
Pairs new FCS teachers with any experienced mentors within building or school	7	30
Is adequately funded	7	30
Is supported by administrators	14	61
Provides compensation for mentor teachers	6	26
Includes recognition for mentors	6	26

Table 8 (continued)

Program practices	Number	Percent (%)
Provides training and support for mentors	10	44
Includes an evaluation component to check for effectiveness	9	39
Contains written program and resource materials	14	61
Contains criteria for selecting mentors	8	35
Contains clear expectations for the mentor/mentee relationship	9	39
Provides mentor peer support groups	6	26
Contains clearly defined roles for mentors	8	35
Includes a professional development action plan for mentors and mentees	7	30
Involves collaborative leadership by two or more FCS professional groups	5	22

*Note.* Respondents could select all of the practices that applied to the programs with which they were associated.

### Survey Question #10:

**Which of the following types of support would help improve the mentoring of FCS teachers in your state, school, institution, or organization?**

Fifty-seven percent of the respondents agreed that financial support for mentors, beginning teachers, or program staff would help improve the FCS beginning teacher mentoring programs in their states, institutions, schools, or organizations. Support in the area of training for mentors was indicated as a priority by 47% of the respondents. Evaluation of the effectiveness of programs was an area where 40% of the respondents felt support would

improve the FCS mentoring programs. Thirty-three percent agreed that assistance in planning mentoring programs would improve programming. One respondent selected the “other” category and noted that the intentional pairing of teachers within the FCS discipline would help support mentoring programming. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they were unsure which of the supports listed would help improve the mentoring of FCS teachers in their states, institutions, schools, or organizations. Respondents were able to mark each of the support items that they felt could improve their FCS mentoring programs in this question. Therefore, the percentages totaled more than 100.

Table 9  
*Support That Would Help Improve FCS Mentoring Programs (N=30)*

Type of support	Number of responses	Response percent (%)
Financial support for mentors, beginning teachers, or program staff	17	57
Training for mentors	14	47
Manuals, training supplies, forms	8	27
Assistance in planning mentoring programs	10	33
Evaluation of the effectiveness of mentoring programs	12	40
Unsure	11	37
No support needed	0	0
Other	2	7

*Note.* Respondents could select any number of support items.

**Survey Question #11:**

**Briefly describe features of FCS induction programs that are in place in your state, institution, school, or organization.**

Of the sample population, 24 FCS teacher educators or FCS state department of education administrators described features of the FCS induction programs that were in place in their states in response to this question. Some of the respondents explained that FCS induction programs were included in state or district programs that were administered for all new and returning teachers. Others reported that there were induction programs that were specific to FCS teachers and they described features of these programs.

Six of the respondents described features of induction and mentoring programs at the state and district levels that were available for all new and returning teachers. FCS beginning teachers were included in these induction and mentoring programs, but the programs were not set up specifically for FCS beginning secondary teachers. In one state all new and returning teachers were involved in a three day induction workshop at the beginning of the school year. Two other respondents described state mentoring programs designed for all new and returning teachers.

Twelve of the respondents reported that their states or districts had induction and mentoring programs in place that were specific to FCS beginning and returning teachers. Respondents indicated that some of these programs took place in conjunction with career and technical education professional development workshops and conferences. All of the respondents said that meetings and workshops were included as part of the induction and mentoring programs. The number of times that the beginning teachers attended workshops or meetings varied from state to state. The number of hours spent in professional

development meetings and workshops ranged from 16 hours to 80 hours per year. Some of the reported induction and mentoring programs only involved new and returning teachers in workshops and meetings, while others also included the mentors in these meetings. The duration of these programs ranged from two days to two years. Features of one of the more involved programs were described as including portfolio development, a source of funding, and structured features specifically for FCS beginning teachers. Another of the more extensive FCS induction and mentoring programs was reported to be a collaborative effort involving state department staff, FCS teacher educators from all institutions preparing FCS teachers, and a professional teacher organization. This program involved beginning FCS secondary teachers in conference calls, regional professional development meetings, FCCLA state leadership conference and statewide conferences, mentoring practices, and a special project if university credit was sought by the program participant.

The scope of these FCS induction and mentoring programs varied widely. The features also varied greatly from state to state. Four of the respondents indicated that they were not aware of induction programs in their states, or that they were unsure of the specifics of these programs. The groups involved in the development and implementation of the reported FCS mentoring programs usually included both FCS teacher educators and FCS department of education administrators.

**Survey Question #12:**

**Briefly describe features of mentoring programs that are in place in your state, institution, school, or organization:**

A total of 24 of the study's participants responded to this open-ended question. This was less than the total respondents because those whose states, schools, institutions, or

organizations had no mentoring or induction programs were to move forward to survey question #15. Some of the respondents reported on both induction and mentoring programs in survey question #11.

One respondent reported that the FCS beginning secondary teachers in his or her state were assigned a committee of assistance, composed of the principal, the mentor teacher, and a teacher educator. Together they developed a professional growth plan based on two to three deficiencies in the beginning teacher's performance. In this program the mentor teachers worked with the protégés in the classroom for a minimum of 50 hours per year to strengthen the beginning teacher's teaching skills.

In one of the responses it was indicated that a new FCS teacher cohort program had just begun to be implemented in a western state. A coordinator of the program had been recently hired to work with 60 beginning teachers. The mentors and mentees were to work together using emails, mailings, personal visits, phone calls, and meetings.

Other respondents discussed features of mentoring programs in their states. Two of these respondents said that beginning secondary teachers in their states were paired with seasoned FCS teachers, who had been through mentor training. Another respondent said that her state had in place an 80 hour program that provides FCS beginning teachers with assistance in classroom management, lesson planning, and creative teaching techniques. One respondent noted that his or her state had mentoring programs in place that prepared the beginning FCS teachers for the PRAXIS III evaluation process. Praxis III is a classroom performance assessment designed by Educational Testing Service (Educational Testing Service, n.d.) to assess the skills of beginning teachers in classroom settings. Another respondent revealed that in his or her state mentoring was conducted informally when teacher

educators or FCS directors in individual districts contacted beginning teachers. Other respondents indicated that mentoring programs varied by individual school district, and two respondents were unsure of the features of FCS mentoring programs in their respective states.

**Survey Question #13:**

**What about these induction and mentoring programs works well?**

The respondents indicated that the leadership provided by mentors, and the opportunity for beginning FCS secondary teachers to make connections with mentors and other FCS teachers were two of the program factors that were working well. Respondents said that the leadership and experience of teams of FCS educators, including FCS department of education administrators and mentors, helped make the beginning teacher mentoring programs successful. Three of the survey participants indicated that the leadership provided by mentors and the involvement of the mentors were reasons for program success. Four respondents suggested that the connections that were made were very helpful to the beginning teachers. These respondents stated that “meeting face to face with the mentors and mentee” worked well for the beginning teachers. One survey participant responded to the question about what is working well with this statement, “Cohort groups organized by subject area and by geographic location give inductees dual opportunity for connecting with peers.” A survey participant from one state referred to the use of an electronic mail list-serve as, “an open forum for teachers who need to ask questions.” Another respondent described the networking among the beginning FCS teachers as very beneficial.



**Survey Question #14:**

**What about these mentoring and induction programs is not working well and could be improved?**

The 19 respondents suggested several improvements that could be made in mentoring and induction programs in their states or within their programs. The survey participants noted that more resources for mentoring and induction needed to be made available to FCS programs. Six of the 19 stated that there was little or no available funding for training and compensating mentors and for program planning. These respondents also indicated that financial support was needed to pay substitutes so that beginning teachers could attend mentoring and induction workshops during the school day. One respondent stated that more assistance was needed from other partners, because the burden of program development belonged only to the department of education administrators in this particular state. The selection process for mentors could be improved to allow only trained, interested mentors to participate in mentoring. Three respondents said that FCS beginning teachers had unique needs and responsibilities, and that the mentors needed to be chosen from teachers in the FCS field. Other survey respondents indicated that clear goals and roles for program participants needed to be established.

**Survey Question #15:**

**Briefly explain how FCS teachers share concerns, experiences, and ideas in your state.**

Of the 65 survey participants 50 responded to this survey question. Four major ways to share concerns, experiences, and ideas emerged from the responses to this question. Most of the respondents reported that sharing occurred during the FCS conferences that were held in the summers and during the school year. These conferences included ACTE meetings,

FCCLA meetings, AAFCS meetings, state and regional meetings, and university workshops. A large group of respondents indicated that electronic list serves were used in their states to share ideas, concerns, and experiences. These respondents indicated that the use of a list serve for FCS teachers helped beginning teachers learn and remain connected to the FCS community of practice. The third way that FCS educators communicated was through the use of an electronic mailing list. One respondent said that a blog was used in his or her state for communication purposes. Five survey participants said that newsletters were used to assist in the communication process.

**Survey Question #16:**

**Briefly describe types of FCS mentoring/induction programs or practices that could be used in your state, school, institution, or organization to further assist beginning teachers.**

Forty survey participants completed this question describing types of FCS mentoring and induction practices or programs that could further assist beginning teachers. Three major themes emerged from the respondents' suggestions. The first was that mentoring programs needed to be more formally structured. Most of the reported programs did not include printed materials, such as manuals and program plans. The reported information about most programs indicated that organized support was lacking. A second theme was that mentoring technology components would be helpful in assisting beginning teachers. Several of the survey participants suggested designing a Web site for mentoring FCS beginning teachers. Others recommended the use of online or distance mentoring programs to assist teachers who were located in remote school districts. A third theme involved the development of

beginning teacher workshops, programs, or academies specifically designed for FCS beginning teachers.

**Survey Question #17:**

**Describe briefly types of mentoring and induction programs or practices that you would like to see implemented by FCS professional organizations to assist beginning teachers.**

One educator responded to the question of what could be implemented by FCS professional organizations to assist beginning teachers by stating, “There are great professionals with incredible ideas to share.” Another respondent said that on-line mentoring would be the only thing that would work in her state due to the distance between school districts and teachers.

Of the 37 educators who responded to this question, 10 said that technology needed to play a role in practices or programs implemented by professional organizations to assist beginning teachers. These respondents suggested that the use of a Web site could assist beginning FCS teachers by providing: (a) a link to successful programs, (b) a link to experts, (c) a link to resources, (d) a means to communicate and share ideas, (e) a way of connecting beginning teachers with mentors, (f) a way of connecting beginning teachers with other new teachers, and (g) a link to professional development question and answers. The recommendations for items that could be included on a Web site were: blogs, links to experts and resources, and chat rooms.

Other ways that FCS professional organizations could assist beginning teachers were suggested by the participants. Some of the respondents said that an excellent mentoring resource was the retired FCS educators, who could share their expertise with beginning

teachers. Others recommended that professional organizations provide sessions for mentors and beginning teachers at annual conferences. Another respondent said that professional organizations could provide high quality, up-dated FCS curriculum to beginning teachers.

**Survey Question #18:**

**If your state, school, institution, or organization has FCS mentoring or induction programs that you are willing to share for the purposes of this study please indicate this in the space provided along with contact information.**

Nine of the 17 who responded to this question said that their states had mentoring and induction programs that were in place at the state level. According to the participants, these programs varied in their content and delivery. Most involved several types of delivery and mentoring activities. The programs included courses, workshops, and on-line classes. One of the programs was 80 hours in length. This program included several observations of beginning teachers and extensive documentation of teaching effectiveness.

**Beginning Teacher Focus Group Findings**

A focus group was formed to collect data from beginning FCS secondary teachers. The focus group consisting of four teachers, who had taught three years or less, was convened on a southern university campus housing the largest FCS teacher education program in the state in August, 2007. The letter of introduction and the informed consent document was explained to the participants and the signed documents were gathered before beginning the focus group interview.

One of the objectives of this study was to identify needs and concerns of beginning secondary family and consumer sciences teachers. Based on this objective, questions were formulated to collect shared insight into the experiences, challenges, and perceptions of

beginning FCS teachers. The following questions were used to begin the conversations with the focus group participants:

- Tell me about your experiences as a beginning FCS teacher.
- Describe your greatest challenge(s) as a beginning FCS teacher.
- Tell me about any mentoring experiences or relationships that have been helpful to you as a beginning teacher.
- Describe some of the ways you are being helped with your teaching.
- What would be an ideal way for you as a beginning teacher to get support?
- What kinds of mentoring would you feel comfortable using or participating in?
- Would you be receptive to the use of on-line journaling and other technology based mentoring practices?

Through open dialogue the participants involved in the focus group revealed several needs and concerns of beginning FCS teachers. Pseudonyms were used to keep the identity of the participants anonymous. Three themes emerged from the analyzed transcription of the interview with these beginning teachers. The themes included feelings of being overwhelmed, feelings of isolation, and feelings of being under prepared for dealing with the large work load and the issues involved in interacting with students. Each of the participants described their experiences as a beginning teacher as arduous. Brandy referred to her first months of teaching as overwhelming when she declared, “I was physically sick every morning from nerves. I couldn’t focus on the students, because I was so focused on preparing lessons every night often until midnight.” Amy expressed her feelings of being overwhelmed in her statement about her experiences, “I always felt school was with me, while I was at home, going to bed, or driving to school. It always felt like a burden. I never

felt like I had it all done, and I never felt like my lessons were good enough.” Jayme revealed her frustration with the difficulty of preparing for five different classes each day. Lisa also described her schedule that included five different course preparations, cheerleading sponsor, and FCCLA advisor, as “overwhelming and tough.”

The beginning FCS teacher focus group also discussed the types of mentoring that would be helpful in assisting beginning teachers. The group agreed that the state FCS electronic list-serve that was currently being used by each of these beginning FCS teachers was a very good way to share ideas and to ask questions of peers. The participants also concurred with the idea that having conversations in person with other FCS teachers was very helpful to them. The beginning teachers indicated that a Web site with lesson plans addressing each of the FCS standards would help them save time in lesson preparation. The focus group participants suggested that ideas and lesson plans belonging to outstanding teachers be placed on discs for distribution. They also recommended that videos of seasoned teachers discussing their experiences and ideas be placed on a Web site designed exclusively for FCS teachers.

### **Teacher Educator Focus Group Findings**

A second focus group of FCS teacher education professionals was formed to assist in the conceptualization of a mentoring model to assist beginning secondary teachers in FCS education. During the initial meeting of the teacher educator focus group, the participants discussed the perceived needs and concerns of beginning FCS teachers. They were also engaged in conversation with the researcher addressing the following:

- What can be done about meeting the needs of beginning FCS teachers?
- How can mentoring programs assist beginning FCS teachers adjust to teaching?

- What needs to be included in a mentoring program for FCS beginning teachers?
- What types of delivery systems could be used in mentoring programs?
- How can FCS beginning teacher mentoring programs be administered?
- What new ways of mentoring can you imagine working well?

The focus group participants agreed that beginning FCS teachers need to be mentored in order to increase their effectiveness in the classroom. They determined that mentors need to be involved in training, and that there should be a matching process established to ensure the compatibility of mentors and protégés. The group also agreed that mentors needed to be recognized for their work and contributions. Some of the ideas given for the components of a mentoring program for beginning teachers were the following: (a) best practices resources, (b) WebQuests, (c) a leadership component, (c) an FCCLA component , (d) a peer support network, (e) established FCS expert advice and conversations, (f) interviews with veteran FCS teachers, (g) mentor teacher training, (f) guidelines, and (g) recognition.

When asked about the types of delivery systems that could be used in a FCS beginning teacher mentoring program the participants recommended the following: (a) a national data base, (b) a clearing house, (c) discussion boards, (d) new teacher in-service, (e) online training of mentors, (f) a Web site, (g) chat rooms, and (h) an online lesson plan library.

### **Summary**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher has determined that a structured mentoring program designed to assist beginning FCS secondary teachers would be very beneficial. Although three participants reported that their state had extensive, well-developed mentoring and induction programs at the state level, no national programs were

found to be in place to assist beginning FCS secondary teachers. According to this study's findings and the review of literature, programs specifically designed for FCS beginning teachers are very important in the retention of those teachers.

The FCS teacher educator focus group recommended the development of a new mentoring model that would include a community of practitioners and professionals who were focused on supporting beginning FCS teachers. The focus group also discussed the establishment of a national coordinator to administer the mentoring program. The focus group participants agreed that a technology-based, national mentoring program would greatly benefit the FCS beginning secondary teachers. They determined that because the beginning FCS teachers' technological abilities are extensive, a Web-based mentoring model would be a valuable asset for these FACS secondary teachers.



## CHAPTER V: TEACHFOREVER.COM

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an explanation of the mentoring model for beginning teachers to be submitted for publication in a refereed professional journal. Below is the manuscript describing the *TeachForever.com* mentoring model.

### **A Model for Mentoring Beginning Family and Consumer Sciences Teachers**

Teachers change the world, one person at a time. Preparing pre-service educators for the roles they will play in the lives of young people requires significant effort. Education students often find their college preparation, including content, pedagogy and practice, to be stimulating and enjoyable. Student teaching offers the opportunity to observe and perform within a controlled environment. Everything begins to gel and the student teacher starts to see the relevance of prior coursework and experiences as s/he develops her or his original teaching style.

What happens in those beginning years when the teacher finally gets his or her own classroom—the end result of all those years of preparation to be a teacher? What happens to 20 to 50% of beginning teachers when they close their classroom doors and face their students (National Education Association (NEA), n.d.)? Why do so many beginning teachers choose to leave the classroom within those first five years to pursue other careers? Why, in particular, do family and consumer sciences (FCS) beginning educators abandon their original career goal of being teachers?

Professionals across all disciplines have speculated the reasons for this perpetual problem. Some suggest that younger generations are more comfortable making changes in their career choices than previous generations (Lancaster, & Stillman, 2002). Others claim that beginning teachers frequently feel isolated, unsupported, ill prepared and inept at

handling the challenges of teaching (Boreen & Niday, 2000; Halford, 1998; Lichty & Robles, 2003; National Education Association, n.d.; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). These sentiments are compounded for the FCS beginning teacher with additional challenges of preparing several for laboratories and course preparations each day, receiving insufficient funding, combating public and administrative stereotypes that FCS is irrelevant, and battling student perceptions of an elective course being one that is less rigorous than other disciplines (Lichty & Robles, 2003). Unfortunately, beginning FCS teachers can easily lose sight of the significant role they play in the lives of their students and give up (Mimbs, 2000).

Addressing this all-too-common scenario is one that FCS teacher educators and professionals are prioritizing as a major concern (Bull & Cummings, 2002; Stout, Couch & Fowler, 1998; Miller & Meszaros, 1996). What should be done to assist beginning FCS teachers in the challenges they face daily? Could a new model of mentoring be created that addresses their specific needs? If so, what would that model look like?

Many FCS teacher preparation programs have an induction or mentoring program in place to provide assistance to beginning teachers. Likewise, many schools provide mentoring programs that link neophyte teachers with veteran educators. Professional associations provide workshops and seminars designed to provide new approaches and strategies for teaching. Each of these support systems is helpful to new teachers, but do not provide a comprehensive agenda uniquely designed for the purpose of supporting beginning FCS teachers.

The purpose of the study reported herein was to conceptualize a mentoring model for beginning FCS teachers. Mentoring programs and practices have been reported as being beneficial in retaining new teachers (Burke, 2002; Sweeny, 2001). At present, there are no

national models for mentoring FCS educators. Suppose FCS was able to support through a national initiative or external funding, a model where professionals could interact regularly with those who need support and mentoring? What if all of the technological means were implemented to provide a clearinghouse of information, and knowledge and support, that FCS professionals could access at any time to get or provide assistance?

Technology is being used to provide assistance for experienced and beginning teachers. Electronic list services already enable teachers to share concerns, practices, experiences, and educational issues (Bonk et al., 2004; Klecka, 2004; Manley, Sweaney, and Valente, 2000; Redmond, 2002). Technology provides another forum for developing a community of practitioners. Organizations such as the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) and Kappa Omicron Nu (KON) have existing programs that support mentoring. The possibility of linking these organizations with state departments, university teacher education programs, and others that offer similar support could provide a more thorough model where all those concerned with mentoring could participate.

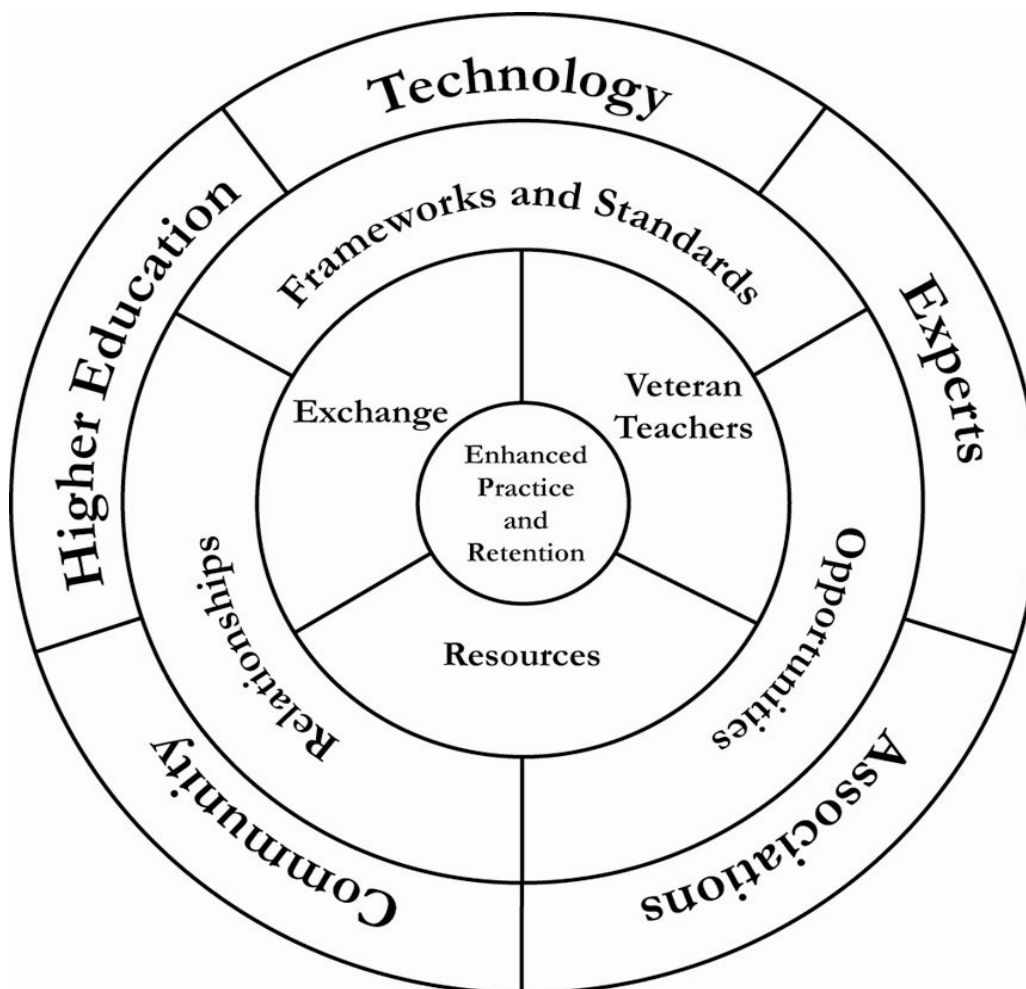
### **Mentoring Model Conceptualization**

This technology-based model was conceptualized to bring together professionals and provide them with the ability to interact on a regular basis and support best practices in FCS secondary education. The Web site provides beginning teachers with opportunities for interaction and professional growth, relationship building, and foundations in FCS standards based curriculum development. Beginning teachers will be able to use the Web site to exchange ideas, to share and secure resources, and to interact with veteran FCS teachers. The Web site will host numerous resources that will be made available to teachers through the use of blogs, electronic mailing lists, streaming videos, chat rooms, electronic

blackboards and other technology-based instruction. Veteran teachers, teacher educators, and state administrators will be able to use the model to post current curriculum guides and plans, ask questions, mentor teachers, network, and help place teachers in positions nationwide.

*TeachForever.org* was the name selected to reflect the components and mission of the national mentoring program. A diagram illustrating the model is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. TeachForever.org Web site components.



*Figure 1.* The conceptualized mentoring model components of the *TeachForever.org* Web site are labeled. The model will be configured using color to differentiate the components for visual clarity when prepared for publication.

### **The Essence of the Mentoring Model**

#### ***Components of the Mentoring Model Core***

The *TeachForever.org* mentoring model consists of four circles. The inner two circles symbolize the core of the model. The innermost core represents the heart of the model and the reason for the model's conceptualization - enhanced practice and retention of FCS secondary teachers. The core also represents the individual teacher who is surrounded by a number of support systems. The outer core represents essential support systems for beginning teachers, including resources, relationships with other teachers, and assistance from veteran teachers. The third circle represents components that will be improved through the use of the Web site, which involves frameworks and standards, opportunities for practice and enrichment, and relationships with other professionals. The outer circle denotes a supportive structure for attaining improved practice and retention. Components of the outer circle include technology, experts, associations, community, and higher education. These model's systems are defined below.

#### ***Inner Core Component***

*Enhanced practice and retention* of beginning FCS secondary teachers is the overall purpose of the model, *TeachForever.org*. The model is designed to provide needed support for beginning FCS secondary teachers by building a collaborative learning environment with seasoned practitioners in FCS education. The inner core of the model provides the foundation

of the technology-based model. Each of the components of the model contribute to the model's foundation—enhanced practice and retention of beginning FCS secondary teachers.

### ***Outer Core Components***

The *exchange* of ideas, teaching techniques, and lesson plans with other FCS educators is central to the success of the model. New teachers need feedback, networking opportunities and occasions to interact with one another. This exchange is expected to be made possible through the use of blogs, chat rooms, postings, and electronic mailing lists. Exchange with peers and experts will also deepen the beginning teachers' understanding of content and pedagogy.

*Veteran teachers* are vital to the success of the model because of the experience they bring to the program. Veteran teachers will be called upon to help develop elements of the Web site, develop lesson plans and resources, provide visuals and videos of instruction, and feedback for questions that neophyte educators may request.

A tremendous number of *resources* are available to FCS teachers nationwide but are not housed in a central location. The mentoring model will provide a place for veteran teachers, professional associations, publishers, school districts, consultants, FCS professionals, teacher educators and various others to provide resources that can assist all FCS teachers. Moreover, links will be provided to useful and appropriate Web sites.

### ***Inner or Third Circle Components***

Family and consumer sciences education has a plethora of local and state frameworks and standards, but at present new teachers have to spend extensive time searching to identify all that are available. The model will provide a central clearinghouse for all curriculum

materials and state frameworks and standards. More importantly, it will include the FCS national standards and appropriate Internet links.

*Opportunities* to improve practice and connect with other beginning and veteran teachers are very important for all FCS teachers. The Web site can provide that opportunity. This component of the model provides professional development opportunities by connecting professionals with one another and with professional organizations. Internet links will give beginning FCS secondary teachers information about professional meetings, educational materials, workshops and seminars. The model will use blogs, discussion boards, electronic newsletters, and chat rooms.

*Relationships* with other professionals are essential to supporting new teachers and will offer an opportunity for all FCS educators to communicate and form associations around the nation. The sharing of ideas through these relationships will serve to improve the practice of FCS educators.

### ***Outer Circle Components***

The mentoring model includes an outer circle of support including technology, experts in the field, affiliated associations, community partnerships, and higher education institutions. Klecka (2004) claimed that electronic conferencing was an excellent way to provide support for beginning teachers. The Internet connects people instantly and is used as the basis for the model's success. *Technology* is needed for the model to work. It's the basis for the communication, resources, and visuals that will assist all professionals who will use the site.

*Experts* in the profession, including veteran teachers, teacher educators, researchers and the like, all possess a wealth of information and expertise that can assist beginning

teachers. Seasoned teachers will be invited to share their experiences, lesson plans, and teaching ideas by posting their work on the Web site. Redmond (2004) concluded that improvement in classroom practices could be successfully addressed through on-line mentoring. She also suggested that technology-based mentoring practices provide beginning teachers avenues for sharing practices, concerns, and ideas beyond the boundaries of their own schools (Redmond). Opportunities will be available for experts to converse with secondary teachers by using several technological outlets. For example the experts in curriculum development, content areas, pedagogy, or service learning will be made available through streaming videos on the Web site. All FCS professionals will be able to communicate through blogs, chat rooms, and/or on-line newsletters. Research published by experts will be posted in a section on the Web site and links to the other journal articles will be given, thus providing access to an international network of professionals.

Affiliated professional *associations* will be invited to participate in the beginning teacher mentoring model making access to association affiliates more convenient. Information announcing professional development opportunities and available resources will be posted for beginning FCS secondary teachers. Collaborative projects involving the practice of teachers are expected to strengthen FCS mentoring programs at both the state and national levels.

A *community* of practice will be established involving all FCS education professionals. A community involving national and state professional organizations, educators, mentors, experts, educational product and textbook companies, and other interested parties will all be given an avenue to share and communicate in an effort to support



secondary FCS teachers. Best practices in FCS education will be shared on the Web site through a variety of electronic means.

*Higher education* units in FCS are an important component in the *TeachForever.com* model. FCS teacher educators and other university professors have expertise in designing new programming ideas that can be shared on the Web site and accessible to beginning FCS teachers throughout the nation.

### **Summary**

The *TeachForever.com* mentoring model described herein is designed to provide beginning FCS secondary teachers with much needed support to assist them in becoming seasoned educators. An outer circle of supportive systems including, technology, experts in the field, associations of professionals, and community partnerships surround the core of the mentoring model. These components represent the word “T-E-A-C-H.” The inner circle emphasizes the FCS frameworks and standards, opportunities, and relationships that spell the word “F-O-R.” The inner core includes the exchange of ideas, veteran teachers, and resources that compose the “E-V-E-R” component of the model. The “E” in the word “E-V-E-R” represents the model’s core – enhanced practice and retention of FCS beginning teachers. The mentoring model will act as a clearinghouse for resources, the exchange of ideas, and mentor training. The new model has the potential to provide much needed support to beginning FCS teachers, by linking them with the resources, organizations, experts and programs they need to find success in their roles as educators. This model also presents the likelihood for growth in the number of scholars who enter the FCS secondary teaching profession. *TeachForever.org* will ultimately provide much needed support to beginning

FCS teachers, so that students nationwide will continue to benefit from FCS secondary programs designed to improve the quality of life for individuals and families.

## **CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

Analysis of the Mentoring Practices, Programs, and Perceptions in FCS Education survey revealed the need for a mentoring model to assist beginning FCS secondary teachers. Based on the findings of this study, it is apparent that mentoring and induction programs presently exist to support beginning teachers in FCS secondary education in several states. However, these programs vary widely in both scope and depth of content and no mentoring and induction program assessment data were reported. According to the participants in this study and the review of related literature, the mentoring of beginning teachers has a positive effect on the decision of beginning teachers to remain in the classroom (Brandell, 2005; Ingersoll, 2001; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Strong, 2005). The aforementioned research suggested that to sustain FCS programming at the secondary level, retention of beginning teachers is essential. Therefore, the researcher concluded that a unified, comprehensive mentoring model designed to assist beginning FCS secondary teachers would be beneficial to the profession.

### **Research Objective One**

One of the specific objectives of this study was to identify needs and concerns of beginning secondary FCS teachers. An analysis of the transcripts from the interview with the FCS beginning teacher focus group confirmed the needs and concerns that are common to many beginning teachers (Lichty & Robles, 2003). The review of literature also identified the many challenges faced by beginning teachers (Boreen & Niday, 2000).

A focus group consisting of FCS beginning secondary teachers met in August, 2007 to provide the researcher insight into what it is like to be a beginning teacher. The focus

group responded to questions developed by the researcher concerning the beginning teachers' greatest needs and challenges, ideal ways for receiving support, and the willingness to use technology as a support tool.

Three major themes emerged when the focus group interview was transcribed and coded. These themes centered on the needs and concerns of the beginning teachers and how these could be met through induction and mentoring programs. The responses given by the focus group participants revealed that each of the teachers had strong feelings of *being overwhelmed* in their new positions. One new teacher described her experience as a beginning teacher by stating, "The time was just overwhelming and I thought I am never going to have a life again. The first month was just overwhelming." A second theme that was brought to the forefront was that each of these teachers *felt isolated* from other FCS teachers. One beginning teacher responded to the question about ideal ways to be supported by saying, "I feel so isolated. We need a chance to sit around a table and have open discussion to share ideas about problems we are having." A third theme that emerged was the beginning teachers' feelings of being *under prepared* for dealing with the large work load and the issues involved in interacting with students. One new teacher said of the workload, "I have five different classes that I have to prepare for and that is difficult."

As this focus group of beginning teachers discussed their needs and concerns as beginning teachers, each of the participants gave insightful answers regarding the question about the types of mentoring that would be helpful for beginning teachers. The group concurred on the value of the Arkansas FCS electronic mailing list that was currently being used by these beginning FCS teachers. One teacher responded to the question about ideal ways to receive support by saying, "The interaction people to people is so important."

Another beginning teacher indicated that a Web site with lesson plans addressing each of the FCS standards would be very helpful. The focus group participants suggested putting outstanding teachers' ideas and lesson plans on a disc for distribution to FCS teachers. They also recommended that videos of veteran teachers talking about their experiences and ideas be placed on a Web site designed specifically for FCS teachers.

The review of literature supports the concerns expressed by the beginning FCS teacher focus group. Several authors agreed that feelings of being overwhelmed, feelings of being isolated, and the rigorous demands of teaching were of great concern to beginning FCS teachers (Halford, 1998; Brandell, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Moir (2003) summarized the plight of beginning teachers very well. She contended that beginning teachers find themselves overwhelmed with administrative tasks, curriculum requirements, isolation from other teachers, and the needs of their students. Like the beginning teacher focus group in this study, Lichty and Robles (2003) in conversations with new FCS teachers discovered that these teachers felt overwhelmed, isolated, insecure, frustrated, and exhausted. Through their work with beginning teachers, Smith and Ingersoll also determined that new teachers are isolated from other teachers and left to "sink or swim" as they try to survive the first years on their own. Boreen and Niday (2000) suggested that beginning teachers, frustrated with the rigorous demands of teaching coupled with their feelings of isolation, often begin to look for employment outside the teaching field.

Halford (1998) noted that beginning teachers need someone to talk to about classroom issues, which is also supported by the findings of this study. His recommendation was that trained mentor teachers using well designed mentoring programs be employed to assist beginning teachers. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) concluded that formal mentoring

programs have a positive effect on the well-being of beginning teachers as well as the retention of these teachers.

### **Research Objective Two**

The results of the survey questionnaire revealed that there were several existing mentoring and induction programs for beginning secondary teachers in FCS education at the state level. The FCS state departments of education administrators and the FCS teacher educators, representing 32 different states, described the mentoring and induction programs in their states, schools and institutions. Forty-nine percent of the respondents reported that mentoring programs specifically designed for FCS beginning teachers were in place in their states, institutions, schools, or organizations. When asked about the status of induction programs that were designed specifically for beginning FCS secondary teachers, 37% reported that these programs were in place in their geographical areas.

The analysis of the survey results revealed that the content and scope of these FCS mentoring and induction programs varied widely. Survey respondents described the features of the induction and mentoring programs that presently exist to specifically assist FCS beginning secondary teachers. Most of the programs included workshops and conferences, often in conjunction with career and technical meetings or FCCLA meetings. Two respondents reported that in their states the beginning FCS secondary teachers were paired with trained mentors, who were veteran FCS teachers. According to another respondent, the state in which she works as an educator had a FCS mentoring program in place that involved the beginning teachers in 80 hours of in-service and other mentoring activities. One of the most extensive mentoring programs for FCS beginning teachers reported by a survey participant was a new program that is scheduled for implementation. The survey participant

stated that a coordinator had been hired to work with 60 FCS beginning secondary teachers, and that the program would involve mentoring through the use of electronic mail, personal visits, phone calls, and meetings.

The data collected by the survey of teacher educators and state department of education administrators revealed that the delivery systems for FCS mentoring and induction programs vary greatly. Of the educators who reported the existence of mentoring programs designed specifically for FCS beginning teachers, most indicated that electronic mailing lists were used as part of the mentoring and delivery process. Also, several educators stated that Web sites were used in the delivery of mentoring programs. One respondent described mentoring programs in her state by writing, "There is great variation statewide."

Though respondents reported having induction and mentoring programs in place specifically for FCS beginning teachers, none reported having data available to measure the effectiveness of these programs. When asked if the FCS mentoring and induction programs included an evaluation component to check for effectiveness, nine out of 32 responded in the affirmative. However, in describing the effectiveness of the programs the survey participants gave only anecdotal evidence that the programs were successful. Several respondents described the programs as very helpful, because of the leadership and support provided by the mentors.

Survey participants discussed the effects and features of the programs that they perceived to be helpful to beginning teachers. Overall, those whose states had mentoring programs in place, agreed that FCS mentoring and induction programs had assisted beginning FCS teachers in improving practice. A majority of survey participants suggested that mentoring and induction programs had helped FCS beginning teachers feel less isolated,

and that FCS mentors had been more helpful than mentors outside the field of FCS. With the exception of anecdotal evidence documenting the differences that mentoring and induction programs were making, no effectiveness data were made available by the survey participants. Ingersoll and Kralik's (2004) research also indicated that mentoring programs differ greatly in their content, delivery, and duration. It was also suggested by Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) that variations in mentoring programs have made the comparison of programs difficult. After examining several mentoring studies, these researchers determined that the differences in mentoring programs have made data collection of program effectiveness very challenging.

Through the review of literature it was determined that no mentoring or induction programs exist at the national level specifically designed to assist beginning FCS secondary teachers. The national FCS organizations are involved in some mentoring practices for professionals and students. However, none of these programs were designed to assist beginning FCS secondary teachers. Though these programs are useful tools for organizations, academic units, and students as they develop self-directed mentoring programs to fit their individual needs, none of these programs were designed specifically to assist FCS beginning secondary teachers.

### **Research Objective Three**

Through the review of literature several components of effective mentoring for beginning teachers were identified. Though no precise list of components was shown to compose the perfect mentoring program, several components have been identified through research to impact the rate of teacher attrition. Smith and Ingersoll (2003) conducted a study that indicated a significant link between participation by beginning teachers in induction and mentoring programs and the likelihood that teachers would remain in the classrooms. The



mentoring components that Smith and Ingersoll found to play a role in the reduction in the attrition rate of beginning teachers were: (a) an assigned mentor in the same field, (b) planning time with other teachers in the same subject area, (c) scheduled time to meet with other teachers regarding instruction, (d) a general program of induction, (e) a seminar for beginning teachers, (f) communication with principals, other administrators, and an external network, and (g) a reduction in the number of course preparations.

Because the probability of departure from teaching at the end of the first year for the participants in the mentoring and induction programs was much less than for those who did not participate in the induction and mentoring programs, this package of mentoring components were found to be significant (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Through years of work with beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs, Sweeny (2001) developed a model that included best practices for effective mentoring and induction. According to Sweeny, effective mentoring programs include several essential components. These components include elements that help define and structure the program, support the program, clarify the program goals and purposes, and assess the effectiveness of the program.

This study found that several mentoring programs exist at the local and state levels to assist beginning FCS secondary teachers. Because of the variations in these mentoring programs and the lack of data measuring the effectiveness of these programs, components of effective mentoring for beginning FCS secondary teachers seems to be speculative at best.

## **Research Objective Four**

### ***Conceptualization of a New Mentoring Model***

The findings of this study revealed the need for a new model to mentor beginning FCS secondary teachers. A conceptualization of a new mentoring model for FCS beginning secondary teachers was developed based on the information provided by the beginning teacher focus group, the teacher educator focus group, and the survey results. Mentoring programs involve ongoing processes designed to support and guide beginning teachers through the necessary transitions to become effective teachers. Though these programs may involve mentoring relationships between protégés and the mentors, there are several other important components that contribute to the success of mentoring programs and the teachers they support.

The newly developed mentoring model includes a community of practitioners and professionals who are focused on supporting FCS secondary teachers as they enter the profession. This technology-based model will be made available to serve beginning FCS secondary teachers at both the state and national levels. The model will be presented as a Web site which will focus on supporting FCS teachers as they enter the profession. The Web site will be available to FCS teachers at any time of the day or night. The new mentoring program will involve technological components, affiliated associations, experts in the field of FCS, community partnerships, and higher education units. Through this mentoring program, beginning teachers will be provided opportunities for interaction and professional growth, relationship building, and foundations in FCS standards' based curriculum development. Beginning teachers will be able to use the new model to exchange ideas, to share and secure resources, and to interact with veteran FCS teachers.

### ***Mentoring Model Components: TeachForever.org***

The newly developed mentoring model will represent a nationwide effort to assist beginning FCS secondary teachers as they enter the classrooms. The name that has been chosen for this model's Web site is *TeachForever.org*. The name was selected to reflect the components and mission of the national mentoring program. *TeachForever.org* is designed to promote professional development and mentoring of beginning FCS secondary teachers. The Web site involves accessible technology that supports mentoring programs and extends the mentoring of beginning FCS teachers. Diagrams illustrating the model are located in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2. Mentoring Model demonstrating the headings of each component of the *TeachForever.org* Web site.

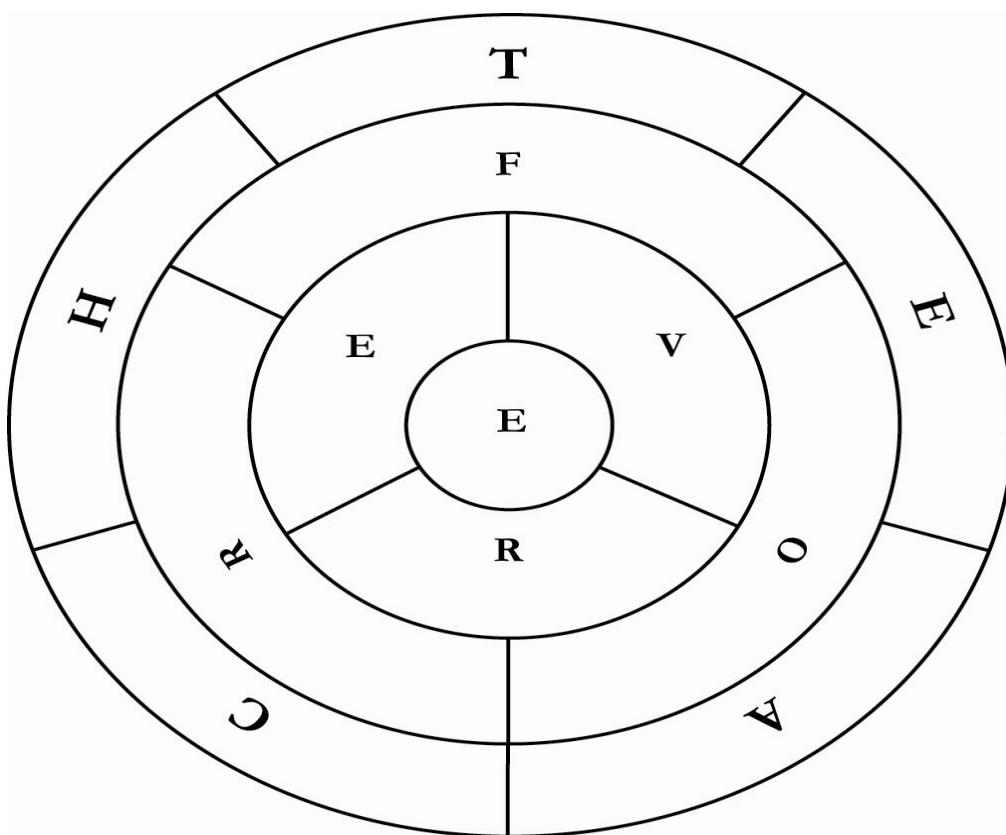
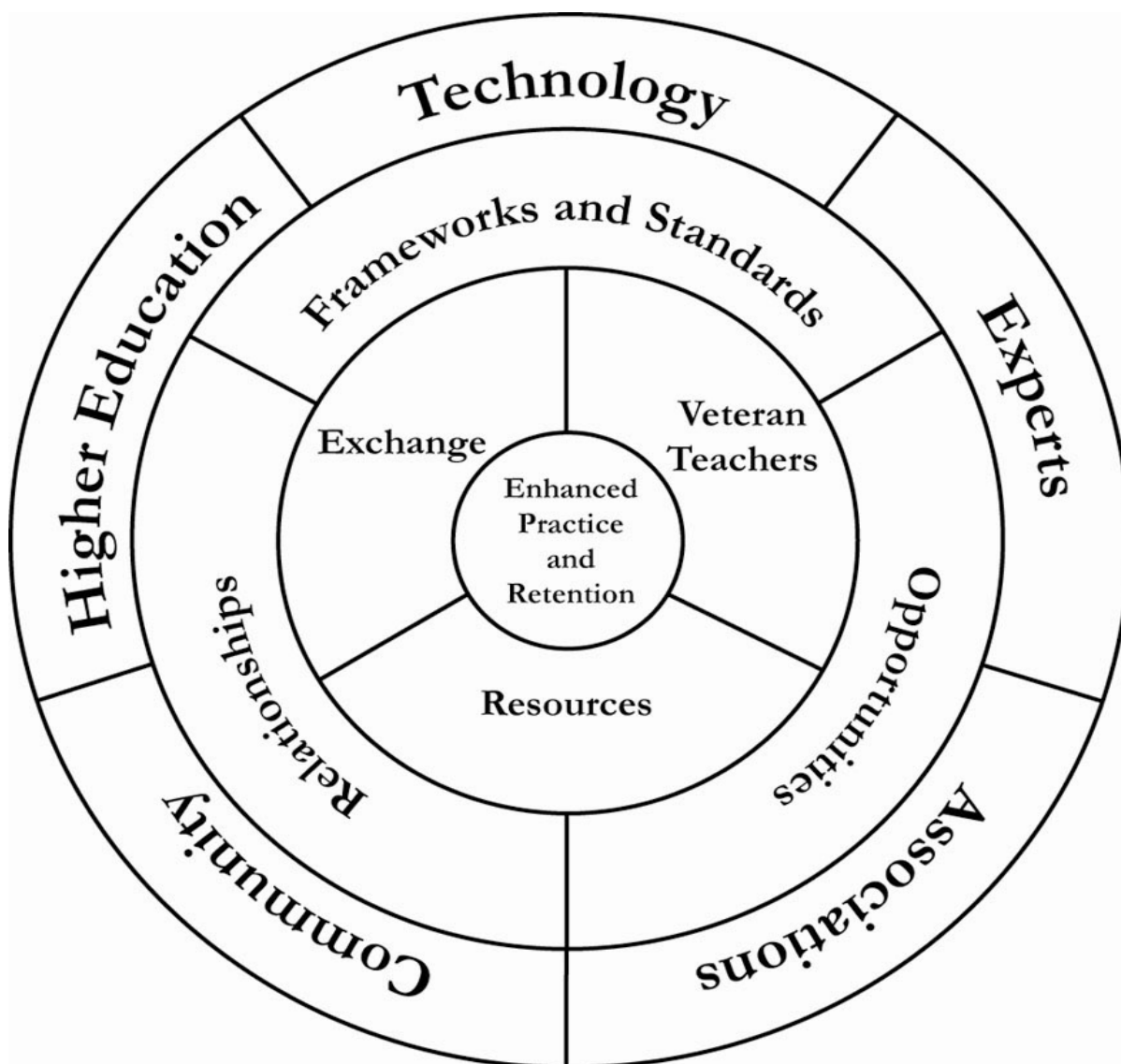


Figure 3. Mentoring Model demonstrating each component of the *TeachForever.org* Web site.



Ryburn, 2007 ©

#### ***Components of the Mentoring Model Outer Circle***

The core of the model is surrounded by an outer circle of supportive systems. These support systems include technology, experts in the field of FCS, affiliated associations,

community partnerships, and higher education units. These “T-E-A-C-H” systems are defined as follows:

***Technology.*** The findings of this study indicated that technology is an important tool in the communication among beginning teachers, mentors, and other professionals. Klecka (2004) determined that electronic conferencing was an excellent way to provide support for beginning teachers. It was suggested by Klecka that a community of practice begun by on-line conversations led to needed change in the performance of teachers involved in one study. Several successful technology-based mentoring programs have provided beginning teachers with support through opportunities to network with experienced teachers and other beginning teachers (EMSS, 2007). Mentoring training materials, blog access, links to experts in the field, and modules focusing on content and pedagogy are all available on Web sites to assist beginning teachers (Cochran & Reese, 2007; EMSS, 2007; MCCE, n.d.). Though some of these technology components exist in FCS mentoring programs, in this study many of the states reported having only electronic mailing lists available for FCS teachers. Several survey respondents and the focus group participants suggested that the use of a Web site would enhance mentoring programs for FCS beginning teachers. Based on these findings the newly proposed model will involve the use of a Web site that is structured to assist FCS teachers. The Web site will host numerous resources that will be made available to teachers through the use of blogs, electronic mailing lists, streaming videos, chat rooms, and electronic blackboards, and other technology-based support.

***Experts.*** During this study the beginning teacher focus group discussed the importance of veteran teachers sharing their experiences, lesson plans, and teaching ideas. The participants suggested that these seasoned teachers share their expertise by posting on a

Web site for beginning FCS teachers. Redmond (2004) concluded that classroom practices could be successfully addressed through on-line mentoring. She also suggested that technology-based mentoring practices provide beginning teachers avenues for sharing practices, concerns, and ideas beyond the boundaries of their own schools (Redmond).

Through this newly developed mentoring model, experts in FCS content and education areas will be made available to beginning secondary teachers on the Web site. These experts will be able to converse with secondary teachers through each of the technological outlets. For example, experts in curriculum development, content areas, pedagogy, or service learning will be made available through streaming videos on the Web site. FCS teachers and experts will be able to converse through blogs or in chat rooms. Also, research articles written by these experts will be posted in a section on the Web site, or links to the articles will be given. Therefore, the mentoring model will provide access to a nationwide network of professionals in the FCS field.

***Associations.*** Affiliated professional associations will be invited to support the beginning teacher mentoring model. Respondents to the survey in this study indicated that additional assistance for FCS beginning secondary teachers could be provided through partnerships with professionals and professional associations. Other survey participants stated that on-line mentoring would be very helpful in rural states where FCS beginning teachers were separated by the distance between schools. Links to state professional associations will be posted on the Web site, making contacts with other state affiliates more convenient. Also, links to the national professional organizations will be provided on the mentoring model Web site. Information announcing professional development opportunities and available resources will be posted for beginning FCS secondary teachers. Collaborative

projects involving the Web site components will serve to strengthen FCS mentoring programs at both the state and national levels.

***Community.*** The FCS beginning teacher focus group recommended that a Web site designed exclusively for FCS teachers be established. The focus group suggested that techniques and lesson plans of outstanding FCS teachers be shared on this Web site. A community of practice will be established involving all who are passionate about FCS education and mentoring. A community involving national and state professional organizations, mentors, experts, textbook companies, and other interested parties will all be given an avenue to share and communicate in an effort to support secondary FCS teachers. Best practices in FCS education will be shared on the Web site through a variety of electronic means.

***Higher Education.*** Higher education units will be given the opportunity to be involved in the mentoring model. FCS Teacher educators and other university instructors and professors will provide expertise in designing new programming ideas that can be shared on the Web site. The teacher educator focus group in this study agreed that the classroom effectiveness of beginning FCS secondary teachers could be improved with the assistance of a Web-based mentoring model. The study's survey participants described mentoring programs at the state level that could be shared with others states on a Web site. According to survey respondents, teacher educators have been involved in the development of mentoring programs. This Web-based model would provide opportunities for higher education units to develop mentoring programs that would be applicable to beginning FCS teachers though out the nation.

### ***Components of the Mentoring Model Inner Circle***

Components of the inner circle, “F-O-R”, emphasizes frameworks and standards, opportunities, and relationships that will be incorporated into the new mentoring model. These three elements will greatly enhance the practice and retention of beginning FCS secondary teachers.

***Frameworks and Standards.*** The survey respondents in this study indicated that there was a need for a formally structured, technology-based support for FCS beginning teachers. These survey participants suggested that high quality, up-dated curricula would greatly assist FCS beginning teachers. FCS national standards and internet links to all FCS state frameworks will be posted on the mentoring model Web site. Corresponding lesson plans and resources will be prepared and posted to give secondary FCS teachers assistance with the development of FCS curriculum. The preparation of curricula will be completed by veteran teachers, beginning teachers, and other education and FCS professionals.

***Opportunities.*** Opportunities to improve practice and connect with other beginning and veteran teachers will be made possible through the use of this mentoring Web site. Also, opportunities for professional growth will be provided by the connections made with professionals and professional organizations. Internet links will provide beginning FCS secondary teachers with information about professional meetings, educational materials, and expertise. The survey participants indicated that opportunities to connect with peers and other professionals were very important to beginning teachers. This mentoring Web site will provide beginning teachers with an opportunity to be linked with other FCS teachers through blogs, discussion boards, and chat rooms. They will also be connected with veteran FCS teachers and experts in the FCS education field through postings on the mentoring Web site.



***Relationships.*** Relationship building with other FCS beginning teachers will assist new teachers in feeling less isolated. The beginning teacher focus group members suggested that isolation from other FCS teachers contributed to their anxiety. Through communication opportunities made available on the mentoring Web site, beginning secondary teachers will be able to develop relationships with other FCS professionals. Beginning teachers will have an avenue to communicate and form relationships with FCS teachers and professionals around the nation. The sharing of ideas through these relationships will serve to improve the practice of all of the Web site participants.

### ***Components of the Mentoring Model Inner Core***

The inner core provides the foundation on which the technology-based FCS mentoring model is built. The inner core, “E-V-E-R”, involves the exchange of ideas, includes veteran teachers, and provides necessary resources to enhance the practice and retention of FCS beginning secondary teachers. Both the elements described in the inner and outer circles contribute the inner core foundation.

***Exchange.*** The exchange of ideas, curricula, and expertise with other FCS educators is the basis for this new Web-based mentoring model. The beginning teacher focus group discussed the importance of having an opportunity to exchange classroom management ideas, lessons plans, and teaching techniques. This exchange will be made possible through the use of blogs, chat rooms, posting, and electronic mailing lists that will be part of the new Web-based model. Exchange with peers and experts will deepen the beginning teachers’ understanding of content and pedagogy.

***Veteran Teachers.*** Both the survey respondents and the beginning teacher focus group participants stated that veteran teachers possessed expertise that would be valuable to

beginning teachers. Veteran teachers will be involved in the new mentoring model. The sharing of their experience will be invaluable to the success of the program. The veteran teachers will be called on to help develop elements of the Web site, and to provide needed assistance and advice to the beginning FCS secondary teachers.

***Resources.*** Resources that will be made available to the beginning FCS secondary teachers are an essential element of the mentoring model. Resources will be provided through all of the components listed in the inner and outer circles of the illustrated model. The availability of these resources on the Web site is essential to the success of FCS beginning teachers. Resources will include lesson plans, teaching aids, assessment tools, and links to useful Web sites.

### ***Mentoring Model Center Core***

***Enhanced practice and retention.*** Enhanced practice and retention of beginning FCS secondary teachers is the overall goal of this new mentoring model, *TeachForever.org*. Therefore, enhanced practice and retention makes up the core of the conceptualized model. Components of the outer core and the inner and outer circles provide essential support for the beginning FCS secondary teachers. The mentoring Web site, *TeachForever.org*, will provide beginning teachers with a collaborative learning environment that involves practitioners in the FCS education field of study. Halford (1998) stated that mentoring is a powerful resource for beginning teachers. According to Smith and Ingersoll (2004), well designed mentoring programs are essential in the support and retention of beginning teachers. Because of the convenience and organization of the *TeachForever.org* Web site, beginning teachers' practice will be enhanced. Also, the likelihood that beginning teachers will remain in the profession will be increased.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The conclusions outlined previously have implications for additional research and practice. The following recommendations that pertain to the findings identified in this study are offered by the researcher:

1. A study of the effectiveness of the *TeachForever.org* mentoring model after implementation.
2. Research in the area of the assessment of needs and concerns of FCS beginning secondary teachers.
3. Research comparing beginning FCS teachers who were involved in a mentoring program to those who were not involved in a mentoring program.
4. An investigation of beginning FCS teachers who have chosen to leave the teaching profession.

### **Summary**

Research often gives us an opportunity to view an issue in a new way. This study investigated existing programs designed to mentor beginning secondary FCS teachers. The researcher also considered the needs and concerns of beginning FCS secondary teachers, and how they could best be assisted. Based on this study's findings, a new model for mentoring FCS beginning teachers was developed.

The new mentoring model, *TeachForever.org*, is designed to address the needs of beginning FCS secondary teachers. The program will act as a clearinghouse for resources, the exchange of ideas, and mentoring programming. The new model will provide much needed support to beginning FCS teachers, which will encourage beginning teachers to remain in their positions as secondary teachers. Because this model will be available on the

World Wide Web, it also has the potential to serve as a recruitment mechanism for the profession. *TeachForever.org* will ultimately provide much needed support to those entering the FCS secondary teaching profession so that secondary students nationwide will continue to benefit from FCS programs.

## APPENDIX A

Approval of UCA Institutional Review Board

Approval of ISU Institutional Review Board

*Sponsored Programs*



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
CENTRAL ARKANSAS

201 Donaghey Avenue  
Conway, Arkansas 72035-0001  
Telephone: (501) 450-3451  
Fax: (501) 450-5339

### Memorandum

To: Ms. Rene Ryburn

From: Kelly Lyon, Assistant Director [REDACTED]  
Interim Research Compliance Coordinator

Date: July 8, 2007

Subject: IRB Approval: "Mentoring practices in family and consumer sciences: A model for change (Iowa State 07-249)"

The UCA Institutional Review Board accepts the Iowa State University IRB Approval 07-249 of the above titled research project. Continuing review will not be required by the UCA IRB. For future reference, the UCA IRB number is 07-059.

Please inform the UCA IRB by memo of any changes made to the research project.

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research Assurances  
Vice Provost for Research  
1138 Pearson Hall  
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207  
515 294-4566  
FAX 515 294-4267

**DATE:** July 11, 2007

**TO:** Renee F. Ryburn  
35 Calais Court, Little Rock, AR 72223

**CC:** Yvonne S. Gentzler  
30A MacKay Hall

**FROM:** Jan Canny, IRB Administrator  
Office of Research Assurances

**IRB ID:** 07-249

**Study Review Date:** 11 July 2007

Following assessment of the modification to the project, "Mentoring practices in family and consumer sciences: A model for change," the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Co-Chair has declared the study exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). The applicable exemption category is provided below for your information. Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review by the IRB. Only the IRB may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

The IRB determination of exemption means that this project does not need to meet the requirements from the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human subjects, unless required by the IRB. We do, however, urge you to protect the rights of your participants in the same ways that you would if the project was required to follow the regulations. This includes providing relevant information about the research to the participants.

Because your project is exempt, you do not need to submit an application for continuing review. However, you must carry out the research as proposed in the IRB application, including obtaining and documenting (signed) informed consent if you have stated in your application that you will do so or if required by the IRB.

Any modification of this research should be submitted to the IRB on a Continuation and/or Modification form, prior to making any changes, to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

## Exemption Category

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research Assurances  
Vice Provost for Research  
1138 Pearson Hall  
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207  
515 294-4566  
FAX 515 294-4267

**DATE:** July 11, 2007

**TO:** Renee F. Ryburn  
35 Calais Court, Little Rock, AR 72223

**CC:** Yvonne S. Gentzler  
30A MacKay Hall

**FROM:** Jan Canny, IRB Administrator  
Office of Research Assurances

**IRB ID:** 07-249                      **Study Review Date:** 18 June 2007

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The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair has reviewed the project, "Mentoring practices in family and consumer sciences: A model for change" (IRB ID 07-249) and has declared the study exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b), Exempt Category (2). A description of this exemption category can be found in the list on the next page. Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review by the IRB. Only the IRB may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

The IRB determination of exemption means that this project does not need to meet the requirements from the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) regulations for the protection of human subjects, unless required by the IRB. We do, however, urge you to protect the rights of your participants in the same ways that you would if the project was required to follow the regulations. This includes providing relevant information about the research to the participants.

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Any modification of this research should be submitted to the IRB on a Continuation and/or Modification form, prior to making any changes, to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.



## APPENDIX B

Survey Instrument

Informed Consent Documents

6-15-07  
ISL TRB # 1 07-249

## 1. Mentoring Practices Survey

THANK YOU for taking time to complete this survey on existing mentoring practices, perceptions, and programs in FCS education. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated. The following definitions will be used for the purposes of this study:

**Mentor** - a seasoned teacher entrusted with supporting, guiding, and developing beginning teachers

**Mentoring programs** - ongoing programs designed to support and guide beginning teachers through the necessary transitions to become effective teachers and life-long learners.

**Induction programs** - programs that include activities and processes necessary to successfully induct beginning teachers into the profession of teaching; includes orientation, mentoring, and staff development specific to the needs of the beginning teachers; usually occurring near the start of a school year

**Field of Study** - professions such as family and consumer sciences, and disciplines such as math, social studies, etc.

**Beginning Teacher** - a new educator who has been teaching three years or less

**Attrition** - a gradual reduction in personnel as through retirement or resignation

## 2. Demographics:

Please answer the following questions to assist with this study of the mentoring/induction practices, programs, and perceptions in FCS education.

### 1. Choose the option that best describes your position in FCS education:

- ☐ FCS Teacher Educator
- ☐ FCS State Department of Education Administrator
- ☐ FCS Professional Organization Director
- ☐ Other (please specify)

### 2. Your FCS position is located in which state?

### 3. Mentoring Practices, Programs, and Perceptions

Please answer the following questions concerning mentoring practices and programs in your state, institution, school, or organization.

#### 3. Identify which mentoring programs your state, institution, school, or organization has in place specifically for FCS teachers:

- ☐ Mentoring for beginning FCS teachers
- ☐ Mentoring for all FCS teachers
- ☐ No mentoring programs for FCS teachers
- ☐ Other (please specify)

#### 4. Does your state, institution, school, or organization provide induction programs that are designed specifically for beginning teachers in FCS education?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other (please specify)

If your state, institution, school, or organization has induction/mentoring programs specifically designed for FCS teachers PLEASE CONTINUE to the next section (section 5) and complete the questions. If your state, institution, school, or organization DOES NOT have induction or mentoring programs that are specifically designed for FCS teachers please move ahead to question NUMBER 15.

**5. Please indicate by circling the response that best indicates the degree to which the following statements describe the FCS mentoring /induction program (s) that are in place in your state, institution, school, or organization to assist beginning teachers.**

[illegible]



## 5. Mentoring Practices, Programs, and Perceptions in FCS Education

Please continue by answering the following questions concerning mentoring practices, programs, and perceptions in FCS education.

### 6. Which of the following best describes how beginning FCS teachers are assigned to work with mentor teachers:

- ☐ Assigned to a mentor teacher in any discipline within the school or district
- ☐ Assigned to an FCS mentor teacher within the school or district.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

### 7. If an FCS mentoring program is in place in your state, institution, school, or organization which of the following best describes the duration of the program?

- ☐ less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 year to 2 years
- ☐ 3 years to 5 years
- ☐ 5 years or more

### 8. If technology is used in the mentoring of new FCS teachers in your state, institution, school, or organization, which of the following types best describes this practice (one or more answers may be selected):

- ☐ Use of e-mail list serve
- ☐ Use of WebCt or Blackboard
- ☐ Use of a Web site
- ☐ Use of blogs or discussion boards
- ☐ Use of text messages
- ☐ No technology is used
- ☐ Other (please specify)

### 9. If your state, institution, school, or organization provides mentoring/induction programs specifically for FCS teachers please check all of the following practices that apply to these programs:

- ☐ Involves a technology component
- ☐ Involves an induction component
- ☐ Pairs beginning FCS teachers with experienced FCS teachers

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 Initial By: jic

- ☐ Pairs beginning FCS teachers with experienced teachers in the building or school without considering the field of study or grade level
- ☐ Is adequately funded
- ☐ Is supported by administrators
- ☐ Provides financial compensation for mentor teachers
- ☐ Includes recognition for mentor teachers
- ☐ Provides guidance, training, and support of mentor teachers
- ☐ Includes a program evaluation component to check for effectiveness
- ☐ Includes clearly defined program purposes and goals
- ☐ Contains written program and resource materials
- ☐ Contains a set of criteria for selecting mentor teachers
- ☐ Contains clear expectations for the mentor/mentee relationship
- ☐ Provides mentor peer support groups
- ☐ Contains clearly defined roles and tasks for mentors
- ☐ Includes a professional development action plan for mentors and mentees to implement
- ☐ Involves dedicated, collaborative leadership and planning by two or more groups of FCS professionals

**10. Which of the following supports would help improve the mentoring of FCS teachers in your state, institution, school, or organization?**

- ☐ Financial support for mentors, beginning teachers, or program staff
- ☐ Training for mentors
- ☐ Manuals, training supplies, forms
- ☐ Assistance in planning mentoring programs
- ☐ Evaluation of the effectiveness of mentoring programs
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ No support needed
- ☐ Other (please specify)

## 6. FCS Mentoring Practices, Programs, and Perceptions in FCS Education

Please describe your perception of the following mentoring/induction practices and programs.

**11. Briefly describe features of FCS induction programs that are in place in your state, institution, school, or organization.**

**12. Briefly describe features of FCS mentoring programs that are in place in your state, institution, school, or organization.**

**13. What about these induction/mentoring programs works well?**

**14. What about these induction/mentoring programs is not working well and could be improved?**

**15. Briefly explain how FCS teachers share concerns, experiences, and ideas in your state.**

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EXEMPT DATE: 11 July 2007  
Initial By: jlc

**16. Briefly describe types of FCS mentoring/induction programs or practices that could be used in your state, institution, school, or organization to further assist beginning teachers.**

**17. Describe briefly types of FCS mentoring or induction programs or practices that you would like to see implemented by FCS professional organizations to assist beginning teachers.**

**18. If your state, institution, school, or organization has FCS mentoring or induction programs that you are willing to share for the purposes of this study please indicate this in the space provided along with contact information.**

## **7. Mentoring Programs, Practices, and Perceptions in FCS Education**

Thank you very much for participating in this research study. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated.



ISU IRB # 1	07-249
EXEMPT DATE:	11 July 2007
Initial By:	jlc

June 4, 2007

Dear FCS Educators and Administrators:

As a family and consumer sciences educator you are keenly aware of the challenges faced by beginning family and consumer sciences (FCS) teachers. Often beginning teachers leave the profession as a result of the rigorous demands of teaching in the FCS classroom coupled with feelings of isolation. Retention of FCS beginning teachers is essential if FCS is going to continue to provide quality programming to the secondary students that it serves. It has been found that mentoring and induction programs provide the support and guidance needed by beginning teachers to find meaning and satisfaction in their chosen career. Some states may be using established induction and mentoring programs to assist beginning FCS secondary teachers, while other states are in need of induction and mentoring programs. Sharing your strategies and programs in response to this survey can greatly enhance our understanding of programs that are presently in place to assist beginning FCS teachers. Your response will also help identify the need for FCS mentoring and induction programs.

**This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time. You are being invited to participate in this study because of your involvement in the preparation of beginning FCS secondary teachers.**

**Title of Study: Mentoring Practices in Family and Consumer Sciences: A Model for Change**

**Investigator: Renee F. Ryburn, doctoral student at Iowa State University and Teacher Educator at the University of Central Arkansas**

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:**

The purpose of this study is to identify programs and practices that presently exist to mentor beginning secondary teachers in family and consumer sciences (FCS). Using the data from this survey, I plan to conceptualize a new model for mentoring beginning FCS teachers that will be available to all FCS educators. Effective practices and delivery systems for mentoring will be included in the new model, which can be used to support FCS beginning teachers nationwide.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES:**

If you choose to participate in this study you will be asked to participate in one on-line survey that will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. In the

survey you will be asked questions about existing mentoring programs that are being used to assist beginning FCS teachers in your state, institution, school, or organization. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer or that makes you feel uncomfortable.

**RISKS:**

There are no foreseeable risks at this time from participating in this study.

**BENEFITS:**

The mentoring research and the newly developed mentoring model for secondary teachers in family and consumer sciences (FCS) will provide support and guidance for beginning FCS teachers, improving their educational practices and increasing their career satisfaction. Ultimately, the mentoring model will contribute to a decrease the rate of attrition of FCS teachers. Improved practice and less teacher turnover will benefit the secondary students who take FCS content classes. The mentoring research and the new model will add to the body of knowledge in family and consumer sciences, and it will be available to assist new teachers nationwide in family and consumer sciences education.

**COSTS AND COMPENSATION:**

You will incur no costs by participating in this study. Also, you will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**PARTICIPANTS RIGHTS:**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or exit the study at any time. If you decide not to participate in the study or to leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) and the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: Subjects will be assigned a unique number and the number will be used in the dissertation instead of your name. Identifiers will be kept with the data that will be locked inside a file cabinet in the chairperson's office of the FACS department of UCA. The data will be kept for three years and then destroyed. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Confidentiality is assured. Your return of the completed survey will serve as your consent for your responses to

be compiled with others. Although the survey is coded to allow for follow-up with non respondents, you will not be individually identified with your responses. The use of this data will be limited to this study, as authorized by Iowa State University, although the results may be presented in formats other than this dissertation, such as journal articles and professional presentations.

**QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS:**

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact: Renee Ryburn, 501-821-1155, [mryburn@comcast.net](mailto:mryburn@comcast.net); or Dr. Yvonne Gentzler, AESHM, College of Human Sciences, [gentzler@iastate.edu](mailto:gentzler@iastate.edu), 515-294-0533, 30 MacKay Hall, Ames, IA 50011.
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, [IRB@iastate.edu](mailto:IRB@iastate.edu), or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

I greatly appreciate your participation in this study. The survey will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Please complete the survey within the next two weeks. Thank you again for your participation in this research.

Sincerely,

Renee Ryburn  
Investigator & Ph.D. Candidate  
FACS Department  
University of Central Arkansas  
501-450-3101; [rryburn@uca.edu](mailto:rryburn@uca.edu)

ISU IRB # 1	07-249
EXEMPT DATE:	18 June 2007
Initial By:	jlc

**Dear Family and Consumer Sciences beginning teacher:**

As a beginning teacher you are keenly aware of the challenges of being a new family and consumer sciences (FCS) teacher. Research indicates that beginning FCS teachers often leave the profession as a result of the rigorous demands of teaching coupled with feelings of isolation. Retention of FCS beginning teachers is essential if FCS is going to continue to provide quality programming to the secondary students that it serves. Mentoring and induction programs have been found to provide the support and guidance needed for beginning teachers to find meaning and satisfaction in their chosen careers. Some established induction and mentoring programs are available to assist beginning FCS secondary teachers. Sharing your experiences and challenges as a beginning FCS teacher in response to this study can greatly enhance our understanding of mentoring programs that are presently in place to assist beginning FCS teachers. Your participation may also help identify the need for FCS mentoring and induction programs.

I will be contacting you soon to ask you to participate in an FCS beginning teacher focus group that will meet on the University of Central Arkansas campus. Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Renee Ryburn  
Investigator & Ph.D. Candidate  
FACS Department  
University of Central Arkansas  
501-450-3101; rryburn@uca.edu



### **INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT**

**Title of Study: Mentoring practices in family and consumer sciences: A model for change**

**Investigator: Renee F. Ryburn, doctoral student at Iowa State University and Teacher Educator at the University of Central Arkansas**

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time. You are being invited to participate in this study because you have been identified as a beginning FCS secondary teacher.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:**

The purpose of this study is to identify programs and practices that presently exist to mentor beginning secondary teachers in family and consumer sciences (FCS). Using the data from this focus group and other data, I plan to conceptualize a new model for mentoring beginning FCS teachers that will be available to all FCS educators. Effective practices and delivery systems for mentoring will be included in the new model, which can be used to support FCS beginning teachers nationwide.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES:**

If you choose to participate in this study you will be asked to participate in a focus group that will be held in McAlister Hall on the University of Central Arkansas campus. The focus group will be asked questions about the challenges and experiences of being a beginning FCS teacher. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer or that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Some of the questions to be asked to gain your knowledge and insight regarding experiences, challenges, and mentoring of beginning FCS teachers will be:

1. Tell me about your experiences as a beginning FCS teacher.
2. What has been one of your greatest challenges as a beginning teacher?
3. Tell me about any mentoring experiences or relationships that have been helpful to you as a beginning teacher.
4. Describe some of the ways you are getting help with your teaching.
5. What would be the ideal way for you as a beginning teacher to get support?
6. What kinds of mentoring would you feel comfortable using or participating in?
7. Would you use an on-line journal if you could talk to other teachers?

8. Would you use the internet as a mentoring tool? If so, how do you think it could be most useful to you?
9. Would you be willing to attend meetings for beginning teachers in your state? How could these meetings be helpful to you?

**RISKS:**

There are no foreseeable risks at this time from participating in this study.

**BENEFITS:**

The mentoring research and the newly developed mentoring model for secondary teachers in family and consumer sciences (FCS) will provide support and guidance for beginning FCS teachers, improving their educational practices and increasing their career satisfaction. The new mentoring model will contribute to a decrease in the rate of attrition of FCS teachers. Improved practice and less teacher turnover will benefit the secondary students who take FCS content classes. The mentoring research and the new model will add to the body of knowledge in family and consumer sciences, and it will be available to assist new teachers nationwide in family and consumer sciences education.

**COSTS AND COMPENSATION:**

You will incur no costs by participating in this study. You will be compensated for participating in this study. Each focus group participant will receive \$10.00 compensation for travel to the focus group site, whether or not you exit the study or choose to leave the study early.

**PARTICIPANTS RIGHTS:**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or exit the study at any time. If you decide not to participate in the study or to leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) and the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: Focus group subjects will be assigned a pseudonym. The pseudonym will be used in the dissertation instead of your name. Identifiers will be kept with the data that will be locked inside a file cabinet in the chairperson's office of the FACS department of UCA. The data will be kept for three years and then destroyed. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

## QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact: Renee Ryburn, 501-821-1155, [mryburn@comcast.net](mailto:mryburn@comcast.net); or Dr. Yvonne Gentzler, AESHM, College of Human Sciences, [gentzler@iastate.edu](mailto:gentzler@iastate.edu), 515-294-0533, 30 MacKay Hall, Ames, IA 50011.
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, [IRB@iastate.edu](mailto:IRB@iastate.edu), or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

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## PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Participant's Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)



Dear FCS Program and Executive Directors:

As a family and consumer sciences professional you are keenly aware of the challenges faced by beginning family and consumer sciences (FCS) teachers. Often beginning teachers leave the profession as a result of the rigorous demands of teaching in the FCS classroom coupled with feelings of isolation. Retention of FCS beginning teachers is essential if FCS is going to continue to provide quality programming to the secondary students that it serves. Mentoring and induction programs have been found to provide the support and guidance needed by beginning teachers to find meaning and satisfaction in their chosen career. Some established induction and mentoring programs are available to assist beginning FCS secondary teachers. Sharing existing strategies and programs in response to this study can greatly enhance our understanding of programs that are presently in place to assist beginning FCS teachers. Your participation may also help identify the need for FCS mentoring and induction programs.

**I will be contacting you soon by e-mail or telephone to schedule the 10 to 15 minute interview. Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.**

Sincerely,



Renee Ryburn  
Investigator & Ph.D. Candidate  
FACS Department  
University of Central Arkansas  
501-450-3101; rryburn@uca.edu



### **INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT**

**Title of Study: Mentoring practices in family and consumer sciences: A model for change**

**Investigators: Renee F. Ryburn, doctoral student at Iowa State University and Teacher Educator at the University of Central Arkansas**

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time. You are being invited to participate in this study because of your involvement in the preparation of beginning FCS secondary teachers.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:**

The purpose of this study is to identify programs and practices that presently exist to mentor beginning secondary teachers in family and consumer sciences (FCS). Using the data from this survey, I plan to conceptualize a new model for mentoring beginning FCS teachers that will be available to all FCS educators. Effective practices and delivery systems for mentoring will be included in the new model, which can be used to support FCS beginning teachers nationwide.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES:**

If you choose to participate in this study you will be asked to participate in a telephone interview that will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. In the interview you will be asked questions about existing mentoring programs that are available through your organization to assist beginning FCS teachers. You may skip any question that you do not wish to answer or that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Some of the questions to be asked to gain your knowledge and insight regarding the mentoring of beginning FCS teachers will be:

1. Does the organization that you represent have mentoring programs in place?
2. Does the organization that you represent have mentoring or induction programs in place designed specifically for beginning FCS teachers.
3. If programs exist briefly explain how teachers participate in the programs.
4. Is or could internet mentoring be used as a tool in your organization's existing program?
5. Do you think technology or additional technology could be used to increase participation in the existing mentoring programs? If so, how?
6. Can you think of ways that mentoring for FCS beginning teachers could be improved or made more available?
7. Are you willing to share programs or mentoring materials for the purpose of this study?

**RISKS:**

There are no foreseeable risks at this time from participating in this study.

**BENEFITS:**

The mentoring research and the newly developed mentoring model for secondary teachers in family and consumer sciences (FCS) will provide support and guidance for beginning FCS teachers, improving their educational practices and increasing their career satisfaction. The new mentoring model will contribute to a decrease in the rate of attrition of FCS teachers. Improved practice and less teacher turnover will benefit the secondary students who take FCS content classes. The mentoring research and the new model will add to the body of knowledge in family and consumer sciences, and it will be available to assist new teachers nationwide in family and consumer sciences education.

**COSTS AND COMPENSATION:**

You will incur no costs by participating in this study. Also, you will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**PARTICIPANTS RIGHTS:**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or exit the study at any time. If you decide not to participate in the study or to leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) and the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: Mentoring materials and programs that are available for FCS teachers through professional organizations will be identified in the study. Subjects will be assigned a unique number and the number will be used in the dissertation instead of the subject's name. Identifiers will be kept with the data that will be locked inside a file cabinet in the chairperson's office of the FACS department of UCA. The data will be kept for three years and then destroyed. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

**QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS**

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact: Renee Ryburn, 501-821-1155, [mryburn@comcast.net](mailto:mryburn@comcast.net); or Dr. Yvonne Gentzler, AESHM, College of Human Sciences, [gentzler@iastate.edu](mailto:gentzler@iastate.edu), 515-294-0533, 30 MacKay Hall, Ames, IA 50011.

ISU IRB # 1	07-249
EXEMPT DATE:	18 June 2007
Initial By:	jlc

- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, [IRB@iastate.edu](mailto:IRB@iastate.edu), or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

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#### PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Participant's Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

#### INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

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